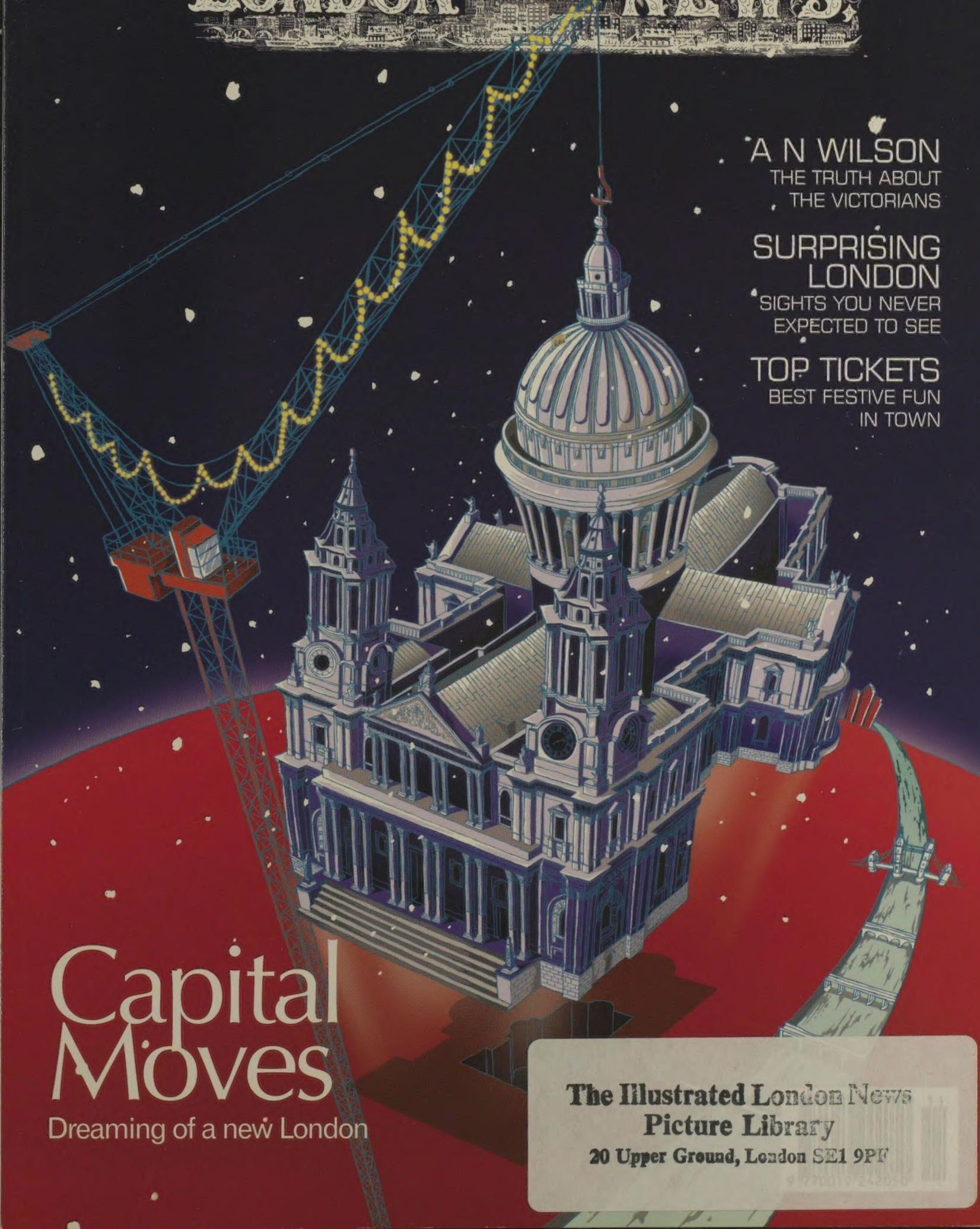


SINCE 1842

£2.50

Christmas 2002

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS



Capital Moves

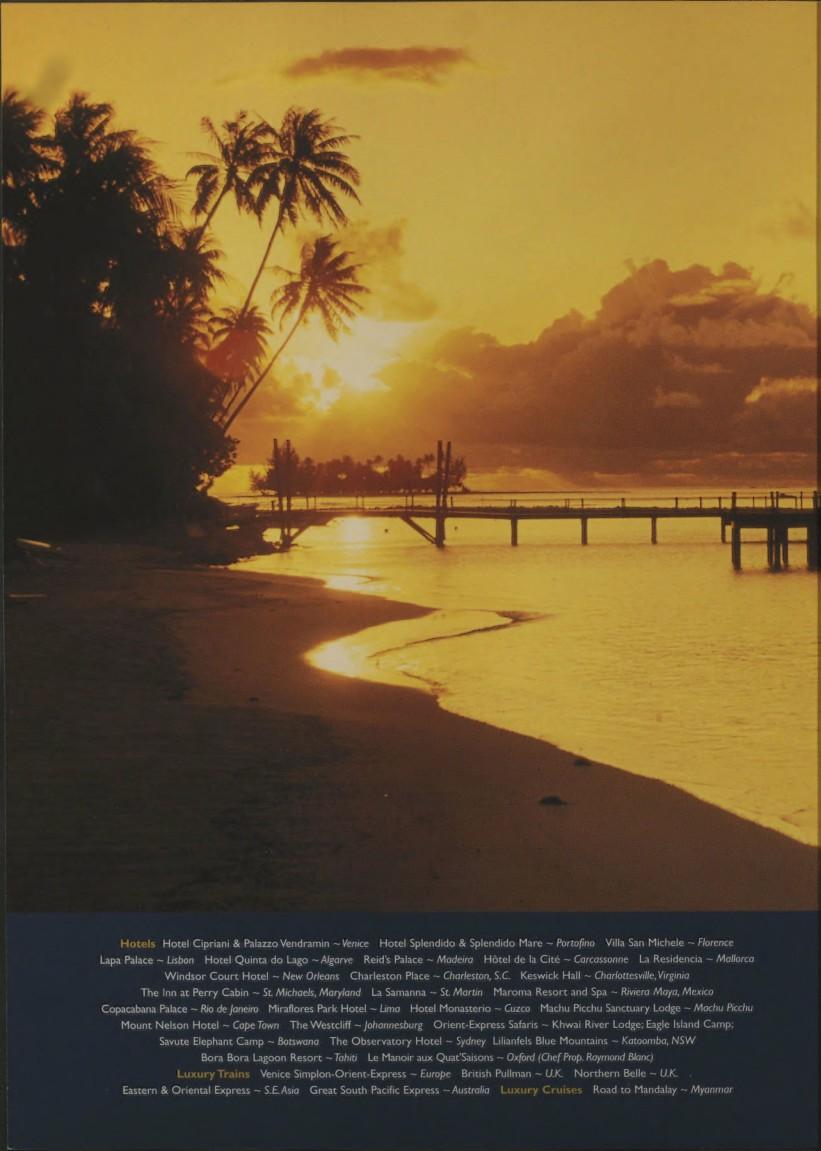
Dreaming of a new London

A N WILSON
THE TRUTH ABOUT
THE VICTORIANS

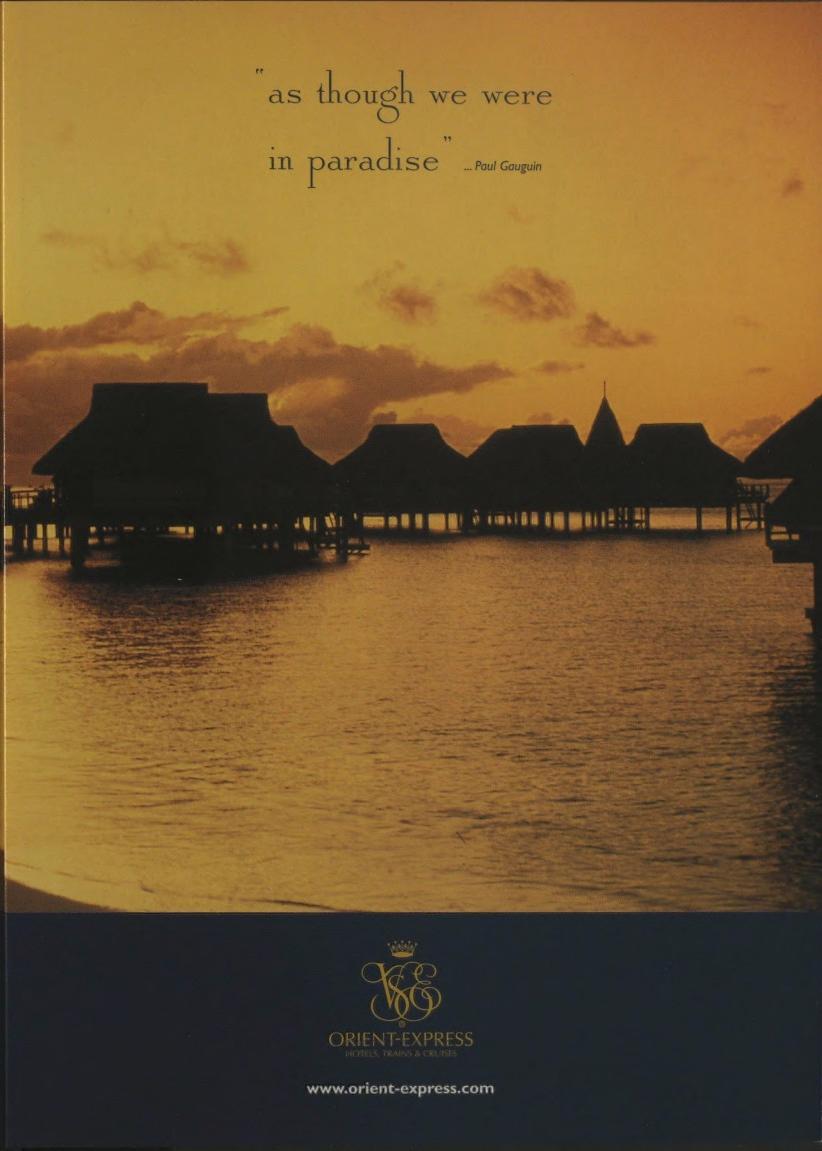
SURPRISING
LONDON
SIGHTS YOU NEVER
EXPECTED TO SEE

TOP TICKETS
BEST FESTIVE FUN
IN TOWN

The Illustrated London News
Picture Library
20 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PF



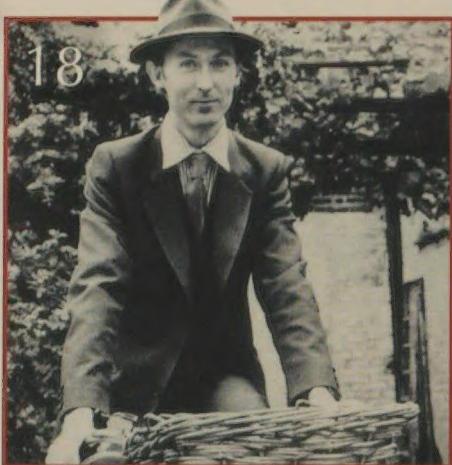
"as though we were
in paradise" ... Paul Gauguin



Hotels Hotel Cipriani & Palazzo Vendramin ~ Venice Hotel Splendido & Splendido Mare ~ Portofino Villa San Michele ~ Florence
Lapa Palace ~ Lisbon Hotel Quinta do Lago ~ Algarve Reid's Palace ~ Madeira Hôtel de la Côte ~ Carcassonne La Residencia ~ Mallorca
Windsor Court Hotel ~ New Orleans Charleston Place ~ Charleston, S.C. Keswick Hall ~ Charlottesville, Virginia
The Inn at Perry Cabin ~ St. Michaels, Maryland La Samanna ~ St. Martin Maroma Resort and Spa ~ Riviera Maya, Mexico
Copacabana Palace ~ Rio de Janeiro Miraflores Park Hotel ~ Lima Hotel Monasterio ~ Cuzco Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge ~ Machu Picchu
Mount Nelson Hotel ~ Cape Town The Westcliff ~ Johannesburg Orient-Express Safaris ~ Khwai River Lodge/Eagle Island Camp;
Savute Elephant Camp ~ Botswana The Observatory Hotel ~ Sydney Lilianfels Blue Mountains ~ Katoomba, NSW
Bora Bora Lagoon Resort ~ Tahiti Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons ~ Oxford (Chef Prop. Raymond Blanc)
Luxury Trains Venice Simplon-Orient-Express ~ Europe British Pullman ~ U.K. Northern Belle ~ U.K.
Eastern & Oriental Express ~ S.E. Asia Great South Pacific Express ~ Australia Luxury Cruises Road to Mandalay ~ Myanmar

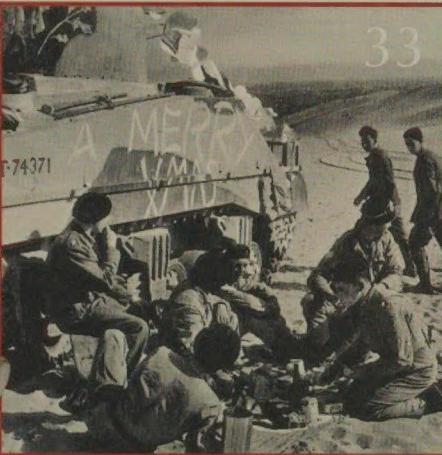

ORIENT-EXPRESS
HOTELS, TRAINS & CRUISES

www.orient-express.com

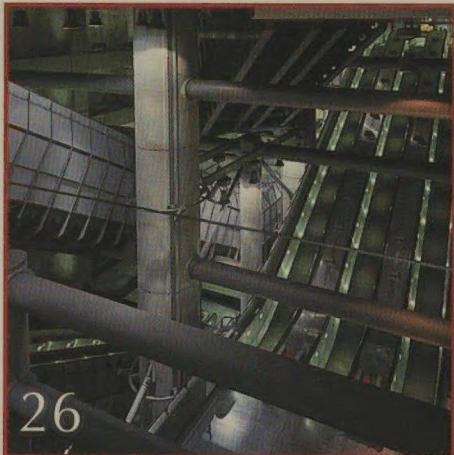
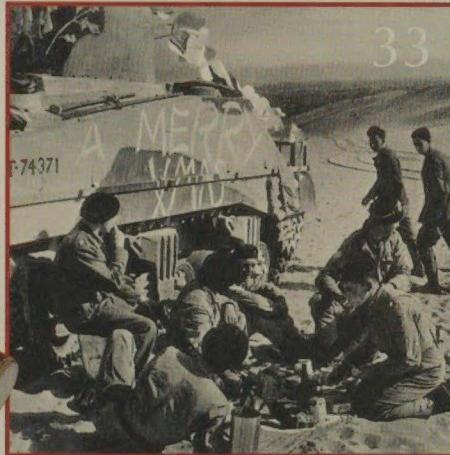


18

contents



7



26

DENNIS GILBERT/VIEW PICTURES

7 A cracking idea

The sweet story of the Christmas cracker, by Robin Norton-Hale.



8 Arcade games

Burlington Arcade's fascinating history includes oyster shells and poltergeists.

Cover story

12 Designs on London

Two Clerkenwell-based architects have come up with a fantasy plan for London. They reveal all to Neil Mackwood.

18 Unveiling the Victorians

AN Wilson has mixed feelings about the Victorians. Theo Hobson asks him what they were really like.

22 Spiritual London

Need to de-stress? In an attempt to gain inner peace, Claire Roberts tries it all, from Aboriginal massage to Shirodhara.

26 Interiors of choice

Top architects and designers choose some unexpected spaces as their best-loved London interiors.

30 Losing our religion?

In today's world of vanity, greed and pop-idol worship, have we finally lost our faith? Theo Hobson finds not.

33 160 years of peace and goodwill

The seasonal musings of GK Chesterton, and Christmas in the trenches.

36 Best of British

A round-up of the season's most innovative gift ideas.

38 What a performance

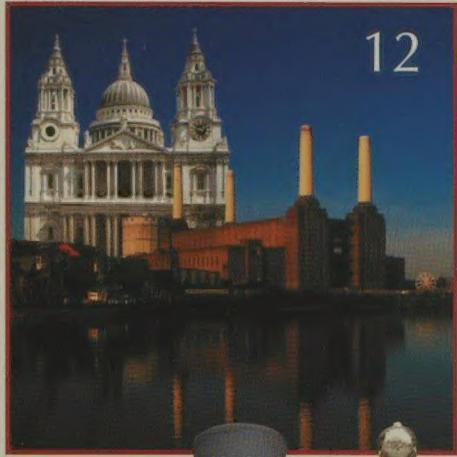
Theo Hobson finds out what it takes to "make a big hat" in today's world of street entertainment.

42 Young masters

East London is a hive of activity for some of the best new art talent around. Antony Thornicroft meets the young artists.

46 What lies beneath

Claire Hutchings goes underground to explore a fascinating world of forgotten tunnels, ghostly caves and lost rivers.



8



52 Eccentric London

The capital is full of weird and wonderful sights. Ben le Vay hunts them out.

56 Hidden treasures

Simon Tait reveals famous masterpieces guaranteed to delight art-lovers, if only they knew about them.

60 Spirit of Christmas

Drinks designed for seasonal cheer.

62 Festive feasts

Dine out in style this year.

65 Top tickets

Our pick of the best Christmas entertainment.

Let us tell you a secret...

London is full of surprises, and in this issue we look at some of the more intriguing aspects of the capital that make it so fascinating both to its inhabitants and its many visitors. We have asked top architects and designers to choose their favourite interiors—with the selection including a private "wet room", the London Oratory and the Royal College of Physicians (p26). We delve deep underground to discover subterranean London, a world of nuclear bunkers, long-lost rivers and wartime hideaways (p46). Some of the quirkier sights, such as a traffic-light tree and a bronze window cleaner, are spotted in Eccentric London (p52). And we reveal some of the great, hidden artworks that can be viewed by the public—if only they knew they were there (p56).

A second theme running through this issue is that of Victorian London, tying in with the *ILN*'s birth 160 years ago and the launch of the first Christmas issue. In an exclusive interview, AN Wilson tells us what the Victorians really got up to (p18); the Bishop of London compares spirituality today with the religious beliefs of the mid-19th century (p30), and we look back at how soldiers in the trenches were celebrating Christmas in the early days of the *ILN* (p34).

Finally, we offer everything to make your Christmas great: best of British gift ideas, special festive menus in London restaurants, a hand-picked guide to the season's entertainment, and a comprehensive look at the many chill-out treatments available for those who need to unwind.

We wish you the best Christmas ever.

Editor: Julia Pearey **Art Director:** Adrian Hulf **Group Managing Editor:** Fiona Ferguson **Senior Sub-Editor:** Suzanne Pavely **Sub-Editor:** Claire Roberts **Art Editor:** Simon King **Designer:** Emma Price **Picture Editor:** Sarah Carrington

Editorial Assistant: Clare Brundle **Circulation Manager:** Richard Pitkin **Group Production Manager:** Pete Kraushaar **Senior Production Executive:** Nathan Eaton-Baudains **Production Assistant:** Ian Till **Group Advertisement Manager:** Jane Washbourn **International Sales:** Victoria Stringer, tel: +33 492 75 82 08; fax: +33 492 75 82 46 **Editorial Director:** Alison Booth **Publisher:** Lisa Barnard **Proprietor:** James B Sherwood

© 2002 The Illustrated London News Group. November 2002. Original articles and other contributions published in this journal may be reproduced only with special permission from the Publishers. Neither the Publishers nor The Illustrated London News accept responsibility for any views or statements made in the articles and other contributions reproduced from any other source. No responsibility is accepted for the claims made in advertisements appearing in this journal, and the Publishers reserve the right to accept or refuse advertisements at their discretion. Subscribers will receive quarterly issues of Orient-Express Magazine and at least two special issues of The Illustrated London News each year. Orders for subscriptions and address corrections to be sent to: O-E Subscriptions Department, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Lathkill Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9EF. Tel: 01858 468888. Fax: 01858 434958. Periodicals postage paid at Rahway, NJ and additional offices. Postmasters: Address corrections to Orient-Express Magazine, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd, 2323 Randolph Avenue, NJ 07001, USA (US Mailing Agent). USPS Number 006-086. ISSN 1350-9012. Annual subscription rates UK, £19; Europe and USA (air-speeded delivery), £22 (\$36); rest of the world (air-speeded delivery), £26 (\$48). The Illustrated London News Group, 20 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PF. Tel: 020 7805 5555. Fax: 020 7805 5911. Reproduction by Graphic Ideas. Printed by St Ives, Andover.



ERCUIS
&
RAYNAUD

Galerie Royale
9 rue Royale
Paris 8^e

MANY OF the traditions that we now consider an essential part of Christmas originated in the Victorian era—the decorating of fir trees, the image of St Nicholas as a fat, jolly man wearing a red-and-white bobble hat, and even the giving of presents on Christmas Day were ideas that only gained popularity in the 19th century. The Christmas cracker has proved to be one of the most enduring of these—and the only one we English can claim as our own.

There is some disagreement as to who actually invented the cracker. Despite the rival claim of a sweetmaker called James Hovell, the general consensus seems to be in favour of Tom Smith, a decorator of wedding cakes who was always on the lookout for new ideas to make his confectionery more exciting. His quest for novelty took him to Paris in 1840 where he discovered the bonbon, a sugared almond wrapped in a twist of brightly coloured tissue paper.

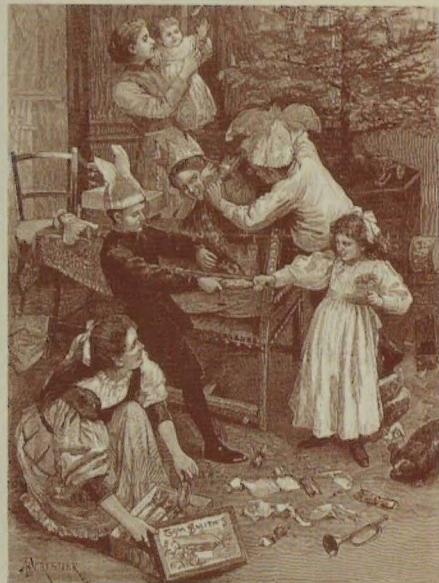
Back in London he noticed that his "new" sweets were particularly popular as Christmas presents

between young couples, so he began placing love messages on tiny slips of paper inside the sweet wrapping. However, it was the addition of the "snap" that really ensured the popularity of the cracker. Legend has it that it was the crackling of logs on his Christmas fire that inspired Smith to transform the French bonbon into

the English cracker, but the design took some time (and a few accidents resulting in charred furniture) to perfect. It was not until Christmas 1847 that the new "Cossaque"—named after the cracking of the Cossacks' whips as they galloped through Paris during the Franco-Prussian wars—hit the shops. Tom Smith's

ingenuity paid off, and the cracker became an instant success. Soon, his Cossack were being pulled not only on Christmas Day but at all kinds of festive occasions, often with a topical motto or message, and always including a surprise gift. Other retailers were quick to catch on to this new trend but, in 1906, it was Smith's company that won the battle for the most coveted commission in the country—producing the crackers for the royal Christmas dinner table. The company has retained the honour to this day, but if you hope to emulate the Windsors' festive spread you'll be disappointed. The designs are a closely guarded secret, and the Queen herself chooses the contents.

Though many of today's offerings are cursed with corny mottoes and terrible puns, crackers weren't always so tacky—the gentleman who wrote to Tom Smith's company in 1927 asking it to make a special cracker containing a diamond engagement ring certainly didn't think so. Unfortunately, although he enclosed the ring and a 10-shilling note to pay for the cracker, he neglected to include his address. The ring, money and his letter are in a safe at the company to this day.



ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS LIBRARY



ROBIN NORTON-HALE traces the Christmas cracker back to the Parisian bonbon.



Class of 2002

ST PETERSBURG COLLECTION

If you want to really impress your guests, splash out on Theo Fabergé's Celebration crackers. Made from silver, gold and six different coloured enamels, the 90mm-long gems each contain a tiny gold toy or pin. £1,470, 42 Burlington Arcade, W1 (020 7495 2883).

PENHALIGON'S

A striking turquoise-and-gold colour scheme makes these crackers,

above left, stand out from the crowd.

Each contains shower gel and soap in two of Penhaligon's most popular fragrances, Lily of the Valley and Quercus. There are also mini crackers with eau de toilette to match. Large cracker £11 each, small cracker £7 each. 41 Wellington St, WC2 (020 7836 2150).

FORTNUM & MASON

The Renaissance crackers take the prize for having the most luxurious gifts—all are sterling silver and

include a desk set of pencil sharpener, paperweight and blotter, a bottle stopper and goblet, and candlesticks and snuffer. The more modestly priced Jubilee crackers, centre, contain adorable miniature items, such as a chrome telescope and a silver-and-wooden peppermill. Renaissance crackers, £1,000 for six. Jubilee crackers, £300 for six. 181 Piccadilly, W1 (020 7734 8040).

THOMAS GOODE

Proclaiming their status at the very

top of the cracker hierarchy are Thomas Goode's bespoke crackers, which come in a riot of glittering bows, embossed gold and tactile, red velvet, above right. Choose anything your heart desires from the store to fill them—just don't forget which cracker is destined for which guest! If you are pushed for time, a pre-filled pack of six, including gifts from Lalique and Herend, costs £750. 19 South Audley St, W1 (020 7499 2823).



IN THE days before oysters were considered a delicacy, the vast quantities consumed by London's poor generated problematic piles of waste in the form of empty shells. So much so that, soon after moving in to Burlington House in 1815, Lord George Cavendish was dismayed to discover that over 40 tons of shells had been lobbed over the wall at the end of his garden. To solve the problem, he took the somewhat drastic step of turning the street that bordered his property into one of the first covered shopping arcades in the world. His solution, still enjoyed by discerning shoppers today, houses one of the greatest concentrations of luxury goods in the country.

Burlington Arcade, an elegant, covered walkway that runs between Piccadilly and Burlington Gardens, opened to the public in 1819. Its instant success was partly due to the presence of the Beadles, the world's oldest and smallest police force. It still falls to them to enforce the rules of conduct—there is to be no running, whistling, singing, musical instrument-playing, parcel-carrying or umbrella-opening in the Arcade—stipulated by Lord Cavendish. The rules may sound a little austere, but the Beadles' immaculately tailored Edwardian uniforms and friendly manner means they only add to the Arcade's charm. Roy Foley—after 21 years the longest-serving Beadle ever—even boasts of a friendship with Sir Paul McCartney, whose first visit as an impoverished musician earned him a telling off for whistling. Now, he makes a point of whistling behind Roy's back every time he passes by.

The ex-Beatle is not the only troublemaker the mall has encountered. In 1953, the window displays of two of the tenants mysteriously switched in the night. Since no one had access to both shops, the practical joke was put down to a poltergeist, now affectionately known as Percy. Unfortunately for thrill-seekers, this supernatural visitor has not shown its ectoplasm at the Arcade since.

Oysters, Beadles and Percy the poltergeist have all played key roles at the Burlington Arcade, says Robin Norton-Hale.

ARCADE GAMES

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING WRAPPED UP AT THE ARCADE

1-2 Georgina von Etzdorf

Founded in 1981, the design team at Georgina von Etzdorf has brought new life to the velvet scarf and a host of other fashion accessories, clothing and homeware. Contemporary colours and textures, teamed with the highest quality materials, result in wearable works of art.

3, 15, 44/45 Michael Rose est. 1893

The three Michael Rose shops in the Arcade are especially busy leading up to Christmas, when gift-hunters come to browse the exquisite diamond and gold jewellery. Staff have assisted many a desperate husband looking for a last-minute present and claim that diamond earring studs remain the panic-buy of the season. If you are feeling a little more adventurous, the three stores also have a wide range of unique antique pieces.



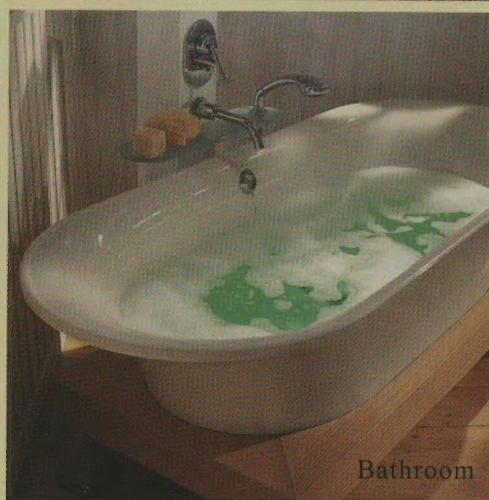
Policing the Burlington Arcade has always been in the hands of the Beadles, above, whose immaculately tailored Edwardian uniforms remain unchanged since it first opened in 1819. Quirky and playful, Georgina von Etzdorf's designs, including the Feathered Friend Tippet, left, are wearable works of art.



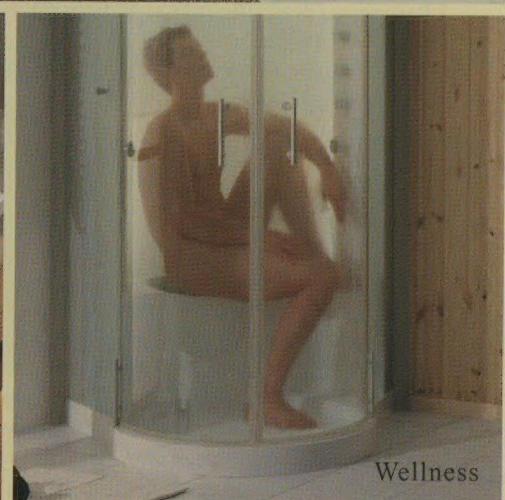
Tableware



Tiles



Bathroom



Wellness

The House of Villeroy & Boch

Everything for a lovely home: bathrooms and tiles, as well as home living accessories, interiors and tableware. You will be delighted: www.villeroy-boch.com



Villeroy & Boch

1748

Villeroy & Boch S.à.r.l. · L-2441 Luxembourg · Tel.: +(352) 46 82 11 · Fax: +(352) 46 90 22
E-mail: info.hr@villeroy-boch.com



6 Berk

The silk and cashmere specialist does a roaring trade in velvet, beaded slippers at Christmas, while its luxury shawls also make wonderful gifts.

7 Baronesse Franchetti by Franchetti Bond

Classic women's walking shoes made by hand in Italian leather are a timeless and practical present. Matching accessories include stylish Amalfi Bugatti handbags.

14 Royal Selangor est. 1885

The world's largest pewter manufacturer has been crafting distinctive goblets, picture frames, jewellery boxes and objets d'art since 1885. In recognition of recent Tolkien mania, the company has produced a collection of character wine glasses and chess sets, but if fantastical beasts fail to excite, there's gorgeous silverware too.

22-23 Carrs Silverware

To celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in conjunction with Carrs' 25th anniversary, the Jubilee collection features a specially commissioned hallmark—only the fourth commemorative example in over 700 years of hallmarking. The range includes accessories (cufflinks; business-card holders), clocks, decanters and champagne flutes, all made from sterling silver plated with 23-carat gold.

25 Map World

The maps for sale are antiques dating from the late 1400s to the 1860s, when the plates from which maps were printed ceased to be engraved by hand. Fascinating and attractive to look at, they are equally popular with visitors looking for an unusual way to record their travels as they are with people who want a reminder of their home town.

27 A la Reine Astrid

The only food shop in the arcade quickly justifies its place among its elegant neighbours with one taste of the pralines, truffles and liqueurs on offer. Astrid has had plenty of practice, providing a chocolate hit for Parisians since 1920, but there are always new sweets to try. The latest delicacies are soft nougat tarts in five flavours.

28-29 Richard Ogdern

This shop remains one of London's few independently run

family jewellers. In addition to beautiful antique jewellery, clients can commission pieces for a truly personal gift.

32-33, 41 Pickett

Pickett combines a taste for quality British leather goods with inspiration and materials from around the globe. The all-conquering pashmina is still extremely popular—update yours with a beaded or macramé version. For men, clocks (available in red, blue and green) in pocket-sized leather boxes are an ideal gift for the stylish traveller.

34 Penfriend

Part museum as well as shop, displaying writing instruments dating from 1900 to the present day, Penfriend sells and lovingly restores both modern and vintage fountain pens. Its speciality is the famous Parker 51, or you can splash out on a silver-plated Yard-O-Led.

37-40 N Peal Cashmere

Cashmere gowns for both men and women are the last word in cosy winter luxury. Don't leave buying this to the last minute though—they're extremely popular presents.

54-55 Underwood

Underwood specialises in watch winders for automatic timepieces. They come in a variety of stylish cubic cases, but there are other items that make wonderful stocking-filler too, including a leather-boxed backgammon set.

56-57 Hirsh

In addition to its classic designs, Hirsh has introduced a "Trend" range aimed at younger customers, featuring diamonds and tourmalines set in matt, brushed platinum.

60-61 Montblanc

Montblanc's leather range is based on the same principles of quality and style for which its fountain pens are renowned. The launch of the Ladies' Business Bag collection, handcrafted using lamb nappa leather with platinum-plated applications, has been a great success.

66-67 Tanino Crisci

As well as leather and deerskin coats to last a lifetime, you can accessorise Tanino Crisci's goods with its matching range of ties, scarves, cufflinks and hats. This year, there's also the perfect party shoes in satin and diamanté.



Take your present-buying inspiration from the Burlington Arcade's diverse range of stores this Christmas. One of the greatest concentrations of luxury goods in the country, you can pick up anything from a classic cutlery set from Carrs Silverware, above, a Lady Sydney bag from Montblanc's leather range, top, and a pretty pair of shoes from Tanino Crisci, above left, to stunning diamond jewellery from Hirsh, above far left, and stylish leather goods from Pickett, top left.



ORIENT-EXPRESS

JOURNEYS ON THE MOST STATELY OF TRAINS

DAY TRIPS TO ENGLAND'S GREAT LANDMARKS ON THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS TRAIN AS ONLY
ORIENT-EXPRESS KNOW HOW.

Historic, sporting or cultural destinations, undertaken in a style and a level of comfort that you imagined was lost long ago.

Each featuring sumptuous cuisine, the finest champagne and the discreet but immaculate service of
your personal steward. Ensuring that your day on the world's most feted train goes famously.

For a copy of our 2003 brochure please complete the coupon below, call 0870 161 5060 and quote ILN 12/02 or visit our website: www.orient-express.com

Title _____ First name _____ Surname _____ Address _____ Postcode _____

I am particularly interested in journeys through: UK Europe Asia Australia or Orient-Express Hotels.

Please return to: Orient-Express Trains & Cruises, PO Box 183, Ipswich IP3 9WB



DESIGNS ON LONDON

Neil Mackwood meets two architects whose plan for London is somewhat more ambitious than Mayor Livingstone's...

MANY PEOPLE have tried to order the haphazard jumble of streets that make up London and its villages. After the Great Fire of 1666, Charles II wanted his capital city to be as solid as any town in Holland and as imposing as Paris. His friend, Sir John Evelyn, had the idea that public buildings should face the River Thames alongside an elegant embankment.

The contemporaneous map-maker Richard Newcourt had a vision that the city should be formed in the shape of an exact parallelogram, with many perfectly shaped square blocks of buildings facing towards spacious plazas.

Then a young astrology professor came up with the idea that London needed a fresh start, with wide streets, large open spaces, a new Royal Exchange and an imposing cathedral—to be the focal point of his new plan for London which would rise, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the Great Fire. Christopher Wren's masterplan was not to be though and, in the way of things, London continued to be developed willy-nilly to take account of its rising population for the next three centuries.

Not even the opportunity afforded to London's planners after the Blitz, courtesy of the Luftwaffe, was taken. Ken Livingstone, London's current Mayor, has his designs on changing the face of

London, and has begun to do so by partially pedestrianising Trafalgar Square and demanding that developers put up swathes of affordable housing.

But this is mere trifling with the fabric of London, which sags under the weight of people and traffic. What London needs is a dramatic makeover, an overhaul that includes repositioning buildings that have no right to be where they currently stand. That, at least, is the view of Clerkenwell-based Mike Liverman and Henry Shepherd of Bisco + Stanton Architects.

They hate what they see as the fossilisation of England and its insistence on preserving its heritage at any cost ('if it's old it must be good'). Liverman points out that our predecessors were not frightened of change: 'The Victorians demolished streets of very good medieval buildings as well as knocking down a lot of Georgian architecture. More recently, the "newmen" own buildings have been knocked down as they, too, become unattractive.'

It was only thanks to the raised voices of preservationists that industrial cities, such as Leeds, were saved from having no trace of their Victorian past. But these iconoclastic architects want to radically rearrange the city. So, step aside Sir Christopher—let's hear it for the Clerkenwell controversialists.



Despite the opportunity afforded by the Great Fire of London in 1666, above right, to rebuild the city, London continued to be developed willy-nilly for many centuries. Left, should St Paul's be moved from its present site because it restricts building and commerce in the City?

The Shepherd and Liverman Plan



To build these elaborate redevelopment plans for London, monuments such as the Albert Memorial, left, could be sold off—perhaps to our American friends?



Below left: the grandeur of St Paul's would be better appreciated if it were moved to the current location of the Battersea Power Station.



1. River Thames: The first task would be to straighten the meandering Thames, which is something the Victorians considered doing and would mirror a similar scheme successfully carried out in Bristol. Ridding London of all those bends would create more, much-needed, building land. "In the old days, the principal artery of London was the river, and removing all the bends will make it a more efficient highway," says Shepherd.

2. St Paul's: In deference to Wren, St Paul's, an undoubtedly handsome building—although these architects see it has faults—needs to be moved as its presence up on top of Ludgate Hill means that it is treated with undue commerce-damaging reverence. The Square Mile, the generator of wealth, is restricted by the venerable cathedral as no tall buildings can be put up in close proximity to this iconic 17th-century

masterpiece—and that constitutes a restriction of trade, and damages London's world city status.

Moving buildings is nothing new. Marble Arch now finds itself marooned at the north end of Hyde Park when it was meant to be a triumphal arch situated outside Buckingham Palace. Temple Bar was removed from Fleet Street because it clogged traffic. The boys from Biscoe + Stanton see no great problem in shifting St Paul's to the south side of the Thames where the roofless former Battersea Power Station now languishes. From here, the domed cathedral will be far more accessible to the public gaze, and the hole it leaves behind will allow Manhattan-style glass stumps to be erected with speed, allowing the triumph of Mammon over God.

3. Victoria: The eyesore that is Victoria train and bus station also needs to be relocated—underground—

below the Battersea site, with St Paul's perched proudly above. "This," says Henry Shepherd, "will restore Pimlico, which is presently cut off from Belgravia. Its reunification (both places were once owned by the Duke of Westminster) will do wonders for property prices in Belgravia's now shabby neighbour to the south."

4. Funding: These are expensive capital schemes and need to be funded. A sell-off of unloved public monuments is now in order, starting with the Albert Memorial (far more intriguing recently when covered in builders' cladding). Then there is Albert Bridge (not as pretty as Hammersmith and inadequate for heavy traffic). Soldiers are ordered to break their step for fear of it collapsing into the Thames. The Americans will surely take it—all right, they snapped up the pedestrian-looking London Bridge and shipped it stateside.

5. The Mayor: Ken Livingstone, whose plan for London rival those of Shepherd and Liverman, should be shifted from his "tacky, silly little building" at Tower Bridge (known variously as the headlamp or glass testicle) to one of the listed gasometers at up-and-coming King's Cross. "A gasometer is an appropriate place for the Mayor," says Henry sardonically.

6. Elephant and Castle: In the spirit of regeneration, the partners believe Elephant and Castle, which enjoys one of London's great names, should be redeveloped. And, indeed, there are plans afoot to do so. With the Elephant now being on the realigned river, there is a need for an eye-catching monument; Nelson's Column will do nicely. "Just as Wren decreed that his London should radiate out from a place on the river, we will have Elephant and Castle as the focal point."

Above: the Shepherd and Liverman plan involves straightening the river Thames to make it a more efficient highway.



Left, Christopher Wren's plan for rebuilding London along classical lines after the Great Fire was rejected. His idea was for long, wide streets with the new Royal Exchange and St Paul's as the focus of the city. Temple Bar, below, was also designed by Wren—it marked the western boundary of the city, but was moved from Fleet Street in 1878 to allow for road widening.

7. Lost Gardens: In the spirit of bringing something lost back to London, the architects want to restore Vauxhall Gardens, which, before they closed in 1842, were situated on the south bank, near today's Goding Street, St Oswald's Place and Vauxhall Walk. Pepys, Dr Johnson, the nobility and royalty visited these gardens to feast and carouse. They came to enjoy fancy-dress parties, fireworks and music in the pleasure garden, which was festooned with private boxes, statues, cascades, a Chinese pavilion and music venues. Their regeneration would provide a more accessible Kew Gardens.

8. Rivers: London's hidden rivers need to be restored to their former glory, with the exception of the Fleet, which was covered in 1773 after it became a sewer (and still is today). But the Westbourne (which runs through Belgravia), and the Wandle at Wandsworth, which once drove 68 waterwheels and provided Admiral Nelson with water to fish trout, should be uncovered. Then there is the Walbrook, a stream that provided the Romans with fresh water but has been covered since 1440, which would make a nice feature in the City; and the Tyburn, which rises in Hampstead, flows into Regent's Park, goes below Oxford Street and Piccadilly and into St James's Park—both make London more interesting. All could be restored, stocked with fish and a new London amenity provided. No longer any need to take a rod on the Test.

9. Transport: If transport remains London's biggest bugbear, the partners have their plans mapped out. Mayor Livingstone might have decided to barricade the inner city and charge hapless motorists for the privilege of driving into it, but Henry and Mike believe their straightened river is the solution. "It will no longer take three hours to get to the Isle of Dogs, so we will introduce a comprehensive river bus service." They also advocate the use of more light railways (like the one in Docklands), and trams will once again trundle along Oxford Street.

About the architects:

Henry Shepherd and Mike Liverman are partners in the old, established London company of Biscoe + Stanton Architects in Clerkenwell. They met at Bristol University, qualified in the same year and were made partners of Biscoe + Stanton in 1988. Together they have worked on such schemes as the restoration of the Wren church Garlickhythe in the City, after it was damaged by a crane falling across its nave, and the striking Tesco store at Warwick Road, Kensington. Both live in London.



10. Tourists: Although they bring the capital some wealth, they also clog London for Londoners. Given that the Windsors remain one of the biggest attractions to foreign visitors, it seems only sensible to ship them out to Windsor, where, as Prince Philip suggested, a royal theme park should be established. This would free-up Buckingham Palace for a more worthy use and rid the railings of all those rubbernecks.

So there it is—the Shepherd and Liverman plan for London. But as the famous Russian architect Berthold Lubetkin once remarked, architecture is merely a form of cake decoration, a means of embroidering a building. Yet, if London is to move with the times, it does need a radical plan to make it a more pleasant place in which to accommodate the thousands who still pour to the city in search of fame, fortune and work. The Shepherd-Liverman plan may, like Wren's before it, never see the light of day, but some big thinking is needed in order to maintain London's position as a leading city of the world.

When the ceiling fell in... her world collapsed

Elderly, alone and vulnerable, and with failing eyesight, Mrs X had struggled for years to make ends meet. When the ceiling of her lounge collapsed, she could cope no longer.

Mrs X is just one example. She now lives happily in an NBI nursing home, with her own delightful room, looked after by caring staff.

Supplying grants, as well as providing sheltered accommodation and nursing care at its homes, the NBI relies on the generosity of those who understand the cruel effect old age can have on those least able to manage.

Your donation or legacy can help return to the elderly the dignity they deserve.

020 7723 0021



The National Benevolent Institution
61 Bayswater Road, London W2 3PG
Registered Charity No.: 212450



No Butler?
Don't want to stay in a top London Hotel?
Still want shiny shoes?
Then let Marco
shine them for you.
He is always
keen to shine.
No Dirty Brushes
No Messy Tins
No Dirty Hands

DO SOMETHIN' extraordinary

Imagine your words,
set to music and
performed at a dinner
party in your own home.

Orpheus International
engages professional
songwriters to compose
music for your words, or
words you inspire.

We produce a CD
recording of the bespoke
song and a handwritten
manuscript. We can also
arrange a private perform-
ance, featuring the finest
Orpheus musicians.

Whether classical, jazz
or contemporary in style,
Orpheus enables you to
give the gift of song.

Telephone
0800 652 6445
020 7627 2662

E-mail
ideas@orpheusinternational.co.uk
www.orpheusinternational.co.uk

ORPHEUS
International

ORIGINAL TELEPHONE
BOXES FULLY RESTORED
£1,895 + VAT

The award-winning design
of these Jubilee Kiosks by
Sir Giles Gilbert Scott RA,
commemorated the Silver
Jubilee of King George V in
1935.

Produced between 1936
and the mid-1960s, these
historical, cast-iron
telephone boxes form part
of the tradition of the British
way of life.

Delivery can be arranged to
all destinations in the United
Kingdom and overseas.

Telephone: 01628 485841
Fax: 01628 486229

Heritage Trading Company
PO Box 1107
Marlow
Buckinghamshire SL7 2YJ



UNVEILING THE VICTORIANS

Despite the popular perception of the attitudes and values associated with Queen Victoria's reign, the Victorians weren't particularly prudish or religious. AN Wilson talks to Theo Hobson about the subject of his latest book.

BACK IN 1983, *The Illustrated London News* ran a brief profile of the writer AN Wilson. He is pictured in Oxford, where he then lived, wearing a trilby and sitting on a donnish bicycle with a front basket. He looks like a character from an Iris Murdoch novel—or, indeed, from one of his own works of fiction. At this time he had already written seven novels and three biographies, and he had just finished a stint as literary editor of *The Spectator*. He was 33. "I feel I am just warming up," he said. "It may be I am not going to be a novelist when I am warmed up." The hunch was more or less right. Though the novels continued to appear, he is now better known for his non-fiction—especially his biographies of Milton, CS Lewis, Tolstoy, Jesus and St Paul. He is also a prolific journalist, with columns in the *Evening Standard* and *The Sunday Telegraph*.

Religion has been the most obvious theme of his writing, in particular the way in which it has receded from Britain's public and intellectual life, but nevertheless refused to go away. Though our culture has largely rejected religion, we are still fascinated by it—and this fascination fascinates Wilson. What about his own religious position? He has always been sympathetic to religion (especially the high Anglican variety), but he has usually preserved a certain distance.

His previous book, *God's Funeral*, analysed the decline in religious faith in the Victorian period. He has now widened his sights to produce a fuller account of Victorian society. It is a lively narrative, packed with unexpected details and provocative generalisations. To discuss *The Victorians*, I met Andrew Wilson at London's Oxo Tower. As I expected from reading his work, he is well-spoken, precise and humorous. He is also surprisingly helpful and friendly.

TH: *The Illustrated London News* was launched in 1842. How far does it represent the national mood of the time?

ANW: One of the things you get from reading those early editions of the *ILN* is an amazing self-confidence, which is so lacking in our

generation. There is great certainty that, on the whole, what your country does is right. But also, there's an incredible capacity for self-criticism. People were worrying about the workhouse issue, and about Ireland. There was no feeling of society closing ranks against the underprivileged—until you get to India.

TH: But the *ILN* seems very restrained in its reporting—you wouldn't know that Britain was close to revolution at this time.

ANW: Yes, but that's quite typical. The only papers that were really critical of the government were the Chartist newspapers—and Chartism was really a movement that began because of the invention of cheap newspapers. But the *ILN* ethos, which to us seems a bit jolly and smug, was what most people thought.

TH: At times you seem very critical of the Victorians, as if they're really a bunch of ruthless nationalist bigots. At other times you're more sympathetic. Was there an internal battle going on in the historian?

ANW: There was a split, yes. I don't like the sort of history that simply sits in judgement of the past. It's easy to say what's wrong with people in the past; it's harder to try and get inside their skins. But there's obviously a great deal to criticise—often I was boiling with anger or hatred towards them, particularly for what they did in Ireland and India.

TH: Did their high ideals turn sour as the century wore on?

ANW: Well, the high ideals were related to a strong belief in free-market capitalism and its ability to deliver peace and prosperity to all. That was a very fixed ideology, and it tended to eclipse everything else, including, very often, religion. In reality it was a largely atheistic age. I developed a darker view of the Victorians, especially in relation to the Empire. I'd always believed the British Empire was unlike other empires—I'd always thought the element of violence was minimal. But when I read more about it, especially about the Indian Mutiny, I was shocked by the extent to which Milosovic-style torture went on, and widespread massacres.



Already a successful writer and looking the part on a donnish bicycle, AN Wilson's picture, above, appeared alongside a profile in the *ILN* in 1983. Now better known for his non-fiction, Wilson, previous page, gives a lively and provocative account of a bygone age in his latest book, *The Victorians*.

Also, in Britain itself, I began to see a darker side. I realised why there had to be a socialist movement, and why mere liberalism wouldn't work.

TH: With such terrible social conditions, how did Britain avoid a revolution?

ANW: What is most striking is that the aristocracy remained in power throughout. They were mainly Whig rather than Tory—this was an essentially liberal age. So it's really down to the success of the Whig, or liberal, aristocracy, which made a very strategic alliance with big business. Really, the same thing is still going on today, but instead of dukes you have New Labour. It's the same idea—of a small amount of people who think they are the enlightened ones—and they ally themselves to the money power. It's a form of oligarchy.

TH: The politics of the period often seem dominated by religious controversy. Were politicians more interested in religion than they are now?

ANW: There were very few overtly religious Victorian politicians, but two became prime minister: Gladstone and Salisbury—both devout Anglicans. Gladstone went to church twice a day—eccentric by the standards of any age. One important issue concerned the atheist MP Charles Bradlaugh, who refused to swear the oath of allegiance before God. Of course, the Tories were up in arms about this, but in private most of them were avowed unbelievers. So a lot of the religious issues weren't very heartfelt. And there wasn't much popular interest in these religious conflicts.

TH: Is that because people were gradually becoming less religious?

ANW: Yes, a decline in religious belief was well underway. It was a less religious society than you might expect. The urban working class had very little contact with religion. In general, the Victorians weren't great

churchgoers. They were great church builders, especially early on, but the huge chapels and churches were almost empty on Sundays. According to GK Chesterton, by the end of the century, atheism was the religion of the suburbs. The main factor was the challenge that science posed to religious belief, above all Darwin. And this new scientific thinking was especially potent because it was popularised so widely; there was so much journalism, literature and cheap books.

TH: One perception of the Victorians is that they were rather stuffy and didn't have much of a sense of humour. Is it true?

ANW: Maybe this is a confirmation of your suggestion, but the Victorians started *Punch*, for instance. There were many other rather unfunny comic magazines. There was also Gilbert and Sullivan, Dickens... No, there was lots of humour, though much of it seems very strange to us. Disraeli was one of the funniest men ever and he was prime minister.

TH: Sexual repression is the other cliché.

ANW: I forgot when I was writing this book that the Victorians are meant to be very prudish about sex. There were so many people who had mistresses or marriage break-ups, or unconventional arrangements—think of George Eliot. But there is some truth to the cliché. If you compare French novels of the period with English ones, Balzac and Zola talk about sex pretty freely; there's none of that in English novels, simply because of the convention that you read aloud the latest Thackeray or George Eliot to your children. Of course, there was a strong divide between public discourse and what was said in private, which you could call hypocrisy.

TH: What about their view of marriage?

ANW: They were much clearer in their mind what marriage was—namely, a contract relating to property. The great revolution was the Married Woman's Property Act, which allowed women to possess things and to have other legal rights. Before then, divorce was more or less impossible for ordinary people. Adultery went on, but full-blown affairs are only possible for a leisured class. The poor couldn't divorce, but they still broke up, they just moved across the road to live with someone else.

TH: The stereotypical image of a Victorian is a scientist or philanthropist with copious facial hair who believes in rational religion. How true is this?

ANW: People like that do dominate, yes—bearded rationalists and so on—but of course there are all sorts. This book is a kind of mosaic with lots of different people in it. Christina Rosetti, for example, was neither bearded nor a rationalist, but she was a marvellous poet.

TH: Is there a coherent ideology or ethos to "Victorianism"? Or is it just lots of people with different ideas, like today?

ANW: It's hard to prove, but I feel that society was more cohesive than today. It goes without saying that it wasn't multicultural or multifaith. Even though there were conflicting ideas, there was a stronger sense of unity.

TH: And even when they disagreed with each other they seemed to be quite nice about it.

ANW: Yes. Cardinal Manning and Huxley would go to the same debating society. You wouldn't get that now. I don't know about the new Archbishop of Canterbury, but I don't think George Carey would sit down with Richard Dawkins very cheerfully.

TH: I'd like to see it.

ANW: So would I; very much.

TH: A final question. If the Victorians could see our society, would they be proud of what they had helped to create?

ANW: Well, it depends which Victorian you were asking. But a lot of their ideals are largely realised. Education, feminism, medicine, cleanliness. And there are some, such as Queen Victoria herself, who would love the multiracialism of modern Britain. She was astonishingly modern about all that. In fact, our multiracial society is a result of that period. If you have the idea that you trade with the whole world, the ultimate consequence is that the world comes and lives on your doorstep. In other respects what would they think of us? Oh, I suppose most of them would think we were down the drain—morally and intellectually.

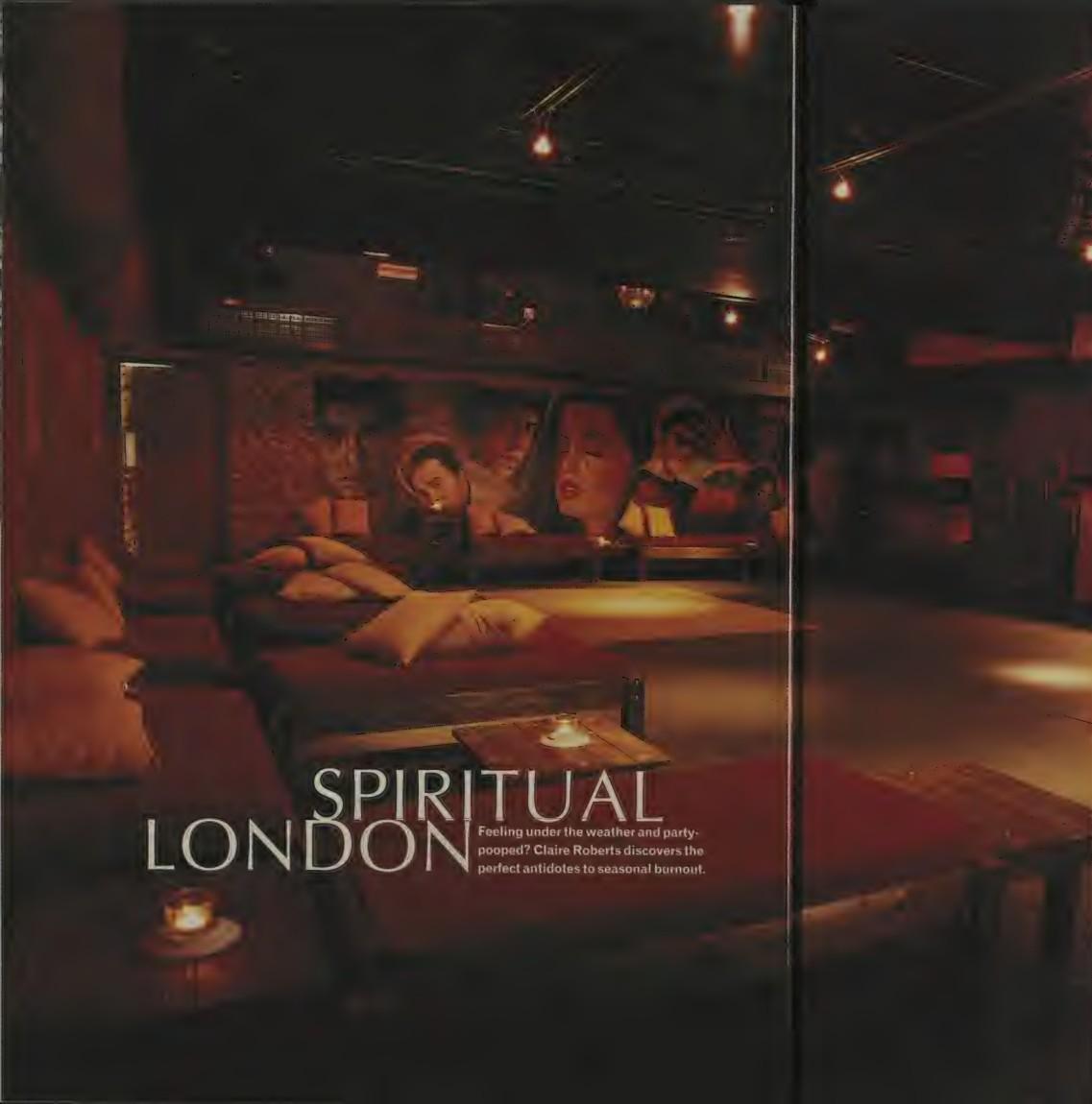


Nobody does it better than us, the Maldives specialists

TO BOOK YOUR DREAM HOLIDAY CALL:

Toni the Maldives Lady
Maldives Travel
Tel: 020 7352 2246
Fax: 020 7351 3382
Email: maldives@dircon.co.uk
Internet: www.maldivetravel.co.uk


MALDIVES TRAVEL



SPIRITUAL LONDON

Feeling under the weather and party-pooped? Claire Roberts discovers the perfect antidotes to seasonal burnout.

THE UK hits the headlines time and time again as home to some of the world's most time-starved, overworked, stressed-out individuals—so what's the alternative? Thankfully, city-dwellers need not despair because the capital is in the middle of a spiritual revolution. All of a sudden it's hip to be holistic, and nowhere more so than in London, where the explosion of complementary therapies and disciplines—designed to promote well-being from the inside out—has reached fever pitch. Be it an Aboriginal massage, a brand-new form of exercise imported from New York or a session with a psychic, London offers ways to revive and refresh even the most winter-worn of spirits. So, should you suffer a bout of festive fallout, take your pick from this selection of heavenly healers, post-party pick-me-ups, and cutting-edge classes—the ultimate tonics to Christmas in the city.

Saving face

One of the new breed of hotels to offer an environment in which to seek solace from the capital, the spa at the Renaissance London Chancery Court offers some of the latest ways in which to purify yourself. Start with a Rebalancing Facial, designed to benefit stressed, winter skin. Laid on a bed, cocooned in towels, lymphatic drainage and pressure point techniques, alongside ESPA aromatherapy products, are used to decongest your complexion. Easily pliable by this time, your therapist manoeuvres you into position to begin your Ayurvedic Shirodhara treatment. With a warm compress soaking out the light, a stream of warm oil is poured onto a specific point on your forehead. "Known as the 'third eye', the area above the brows is associated with the pituitary gland, which regulates the hormonal secretions responsible for the body's autonomic functions as well as our emotional state. The stimulation of this spot encourages hormonal balance and is a great stress-reliever," explains therapist Kirsten. Some 15 minutes later you will be calm of mind and body. Reawaken with an Oriental Head Massage, a scalp-tingling treatment that clears energy points, and you've got a package guaranteed to revitalise.

The Spa at Chancery Court, 252 High Holborn, WC1. Tel: 020 7829 7058.

Yoga at Yatra

There can't be many healthier ways to follow your lunchtime yoga class than with a light, balanced meal cooked according to ancient holistic Ayurvedic methods. With that in mind, restaurateur Sonu Lalvani joined forces with yoga instructors Lana Spitz and Helen Currie, and Yoga at Yatra was born. Every Thursday at the Indian restaurant Yatra in Mayfair, you can follow a 40-minute session of Ashtanga yoga with a three-course vegetarian lunch that leaves you smugly satisfied, safe in the knowledge that it was good for you. "Yoga is one of the best ways to relax and re-energise your body," says LANA. "And offering a light meal afterwards gives you the chance to replenish your body with food from the special Ayurvedic menu." The dishes are deliciously healthy—moong dal served with a sprouted salad; a subtly spiced vegetable khichdi, similar to a risotto but lighter; and mango shrikhand, a heavenly vanilla-infused yoghurt dessert. Lunch doesn't get much more guilt-free. 12.30pm. Yatra restaurant, 34 Dover Street, Mayfair, W1. Tel: 020 7493 0200; www.yatra.co.uk.



Left, yoga in the Bollywood-decorated basement at Yatra. Above, Shirodhara at the Spa at Chancery Court.



Recline in a Balinese Slipper Bath at the Elemis day-spa, top. John Odel performs Kiradjee, an Aboriginal massage, below right. Let your troubles float away, below.

Chakra calm

Tucked in a quiet courtyard behind Bond Street, Elemis day-spa has proved a big hit. The almost overwhelming menu of exotic therapies are administered in discreet rooms, and Elemis products lend a heady fragrance to the air. A Well-Being Massage begins with sweeping movements over your body, Hawaiian-style, followed by an Indian head massage and Thai pressure-point stimulation. Spend an hour in such a way, inhaling oils blended to balance your chakra, and you will be ready to recline in the Balinese Slipper Bath—a bubbling hot tub with massage jets, aroma and light therapy. **Elemis day-spa, 2-3 Lancashire Court, Mayfair, W1. Tel: 020 8909 5060.**

Floating voter

To anyone feeling unseasonably dispirited, an hour spent weightlessly cocooned in watery darkness could be your saviour. A short walk from London Bridge, FloatWorks has six pod-like tanks in which people take refuge. Originally developed to study brain activity by depriving the floater of as many external stimuli as possible, advocates of floatation claim it balances the logical left- and creative right-hand sides of the brain,

Healing hands

Due to be completed in 2003, Harrods' Urban Retreat promises to be a one-stop shop for well-being in the capital. However, it is to the Chakra Treatment Rooms, where an Australian massage technique—Kiradjee—is being offered, that Londoners are flocking. Its founder, John Odel, uses a form of meditation passed on to him by an Aboriginal healer, which involves asking spirits for guidance before proceeding with his healing massage. "Traumatic events are stored partly in the memory but also in the body," explains John. "This meditation makes me sensitive to what a client is storing in their muscles. By releasing negative experiences from the body, the client should find it more difficult to retrieve them from their memory, and the traumatic event will affect their life less."

The first 20-40 minutes, during which your scalp and back are massaged, sees you fall into a half-sleep. John then works his way round your body, applying fingertips to the areas that require particular attention. The strangest sensation, however, comes post-slumber, when John talks through what your body was telling him. **Urban Retreat at Harrods, Fifth Floor, Knightsbridge, SW1. Tel: 020 7893 8333.**



Balancing act

One of the most salubrious of London's day spas is the Spa at Mandarin Oriental. Inspired by Eastern philosophies, there is a range of rituals to suit. Pre-treatment try a 15-minute float in the vitality pool followed by a session in the steam room. Opt for the Ayurvedic Ritual and you will be one step further in your spiritual sprucing. "Ayurveda is an holistic approach to healing," says therapist Sophie. "The world is made up of three forces, known as doshas, symbolised by air (*vata*), fire (*pitta*) and water (*kapha*). Equilibrium of these forces is essential to physical and spiritual well-being." The Ritual begins with your feet being cleansed as your therapist establishes which techniques will best benefit you. Relinquish yourself to the holistic body massage, concentrating on your "marma" points to release tension, with hot stones incorporated to balance and calm. **Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, 66 Knightsbridge, SW1. Tel: 020 7838 9888.**

You've got rhythm

With the explosion of "mind-body" exercising comes a new genre of gym geared to conditioning your body—inside and out. On a street behind London Bridge, Espirito is such a serene space. "Our ethos here is indicative of the way in which Londoners are increasingly choosing to work out," says managing director Ella Barnes. "Espirito is a place to take a breather and focus on making yourself feel calm, balanced and rejuvenated." Yoga and Pilates sessions are popular, but another exercise discipline, Gyrotonic—recently imported from New York—is earning plaudits. Don't be deterred by the Gyrotonic equipment. An instructor leads you through a series of flowing movements that stimulate the entire body. Each move is performed rhythmically, with a synchronised breathing pattern—an exercise in mind-body control. In a capital of converts looking to attain both physical and mental composure through exercise, the opening of studios such as Espirito is timely. **Espirito, 124c Bermondsey Street, SE1. Tel: 020 7357 8565. www.espirito.co.uk.**



The rather sinister-looking Gyrotonic equipment, above. Right, Rosanna Bickerton offers healing Chinese reflexology.

Sole searching

Reflexology works on the principle that the whole body can be treated via the feet. This healing system has been used for 5,000 years, but it wasn't until the 1930s, when Eunice Ingham discovered that the reflexes on the feet mirror the body, that it gained credence as a holistic therapy. Its rise in popularity in London has been meteoric. No one is more aware of this than Rosanna Bickerton, who, as well as practising European reflexology, is pioneering its Chinese counterpart, which is designed to stimulate and energise. Pre-warmed by the green tea given to you on arrival, Rosanna massages your feet with an aromatherapy cream before she takes you on a tour of your feet. "I concentrate on each spot, massaging it five times, which clears energy pathways and rids the body of toxins," she explains. Afterwards, Rosanna talks you through which parts of your body are not working optimally, which, when the feeling of rejuvenation has worn off, gives you plenty of food for thought. **Rosanna Bickerton, Wilbraham Place Practice, 9a Wilbraham Place, SW1. Tel: 020 8769 9709.**

Reading room

In this age of spiritual awareness, it is to psychics that Londoners are increasingly turning for guidance. So much so that Teresa Symes, based in the basement of hairdresser Robert & Shades in Knightsbridge, is booked up months in advance. Surrounded by cards from her leagues of loyal clients, she uses tarot, Egyptian and Scandinavian rune stones and the ancient Chinese system of I Ching as the basis of her readings. Forget your misconceptions of the psychic as doom-laden prophet. Teresa is resolutely upbeat: "I believe our lives are governed by free will. What I tell you is in no way set in stone—my readings should be interpreted as positive pieces of advice rather than inevitabilities." The experience is far more inspiring than you might expect. Some clients come to her with a question in mind, others look to her to foresee what the future will hold generally. However, even sceptics are routinely forced to concede that much of what Teresa says is uncannily precise. Email: teresa@runecast.freeserve.co.uk.



Who Dare's wins

Spiritual healer Graham Dare's work is based on the belief that there is a spirit world from which he is able to "tap" energy. At the Hale Clinic, he explains his method: "During a session I become a channel for healing energy, tuning in to find out when, and where, to move next on the body. Healers do not use their own power—it comes from the spirit guides with whom we communicate." An hour-long session is an intense experience. The first touch might come as a shock—even though he is merely resting his hands on you, a warm, pulsing sensation is immediately palpable. Such is the soothing nature of the therapy that patients often fall asleep. Graham's healing hands treat a wide range of symptoms, and at the Bliss Clinic in Notting Hill he can also give a clairvoyant reading. Non-believers take heed—this guinea pig was cured of a condition that had plagued her for years. **Tel: 020 7831 9387; www.spiritual-healers.co.uk.**

INTERIORS OF CHOICE

They're at the top of their field and have created many exciting spaces in the capital, but which some of the UK's finest architects and designers rate above all others? We asked the question.

Martin Waller

The new Great Court at the British Museum is London's most splendid piece of civic architecture in decades. It is inspiring both as a building in its own right and as a taster for the treasures beyond. Effortlessly, its great space juxtaposes a Roman horseman with an Easter Island figure and Egyptian heads that have escaped straight out of "Ozymandias"—is there a better place for a date? My own wet room also merits a mention. In England, the quest for the perfect shower has taken on mythic proportions. The boiler never accommodates the pump, the pressure rarely delivers and the feeble dribs still manage to flood the floor. The advent of the wet room has changed this. I step inside and am exhilarated by the torrent of water. It's a spot for relaxation and inspiration.

Martin Waller is the managing director of Andrew Martin, the UK's second-largest privately owned furniture and fabric house. An interior designer, he is constantly introducing new ideas that are widely copied. 200 Walton St, SW3. Tel: 020 7225 5100.

Will Alsop

My favourite interior? Like the question of a favourite building, it is an agonising conceit, subject to occasion and mood. The main hall to Waterhouse's Natural History Museum would certainly be in a shortlist. And a meal in the dining room of the Reform Club is one of the most civilised activities known to man. The entrance and lobby of Lasdun's Royal College of Physicians on Regent's Park is one of the 20th century's most gratifying contributions to London's interior space, and I would also add, cheekily, North Greenwich Underground Station to my list. But my most vehemently held belief in this regard is a pejorative one: in the designer restaurant boom, not a single example is of any architectural merit.

Will Alsop, head of Alsop Architects, is responsible for a number of ground-breaking projects, including Peckham Library, which won the Stirling Prize in 2000, and the futuristic North Greenwich Underground Station. He is also chair of the Architecture Foundation. Parkgate Studio, 41 Parkgate Rd, SW11. Tel: 020 7978 7878.

PHOTO: NICK PARKER/ALOSOP ARCHITECTS

Above, according to interior designer Martin Waller, "the Great Court at the British Museum is London's most splendid piece of civic architecture in decades", while furniture guru David Linley finds the old Express building on Fleet Street, above right, "truly inspirational". For hip interior designer Nina Campbell, stepping inside the London Oratory, above far right, "is like walking in to a Verdi opera".

Nina Campbell

The London Oratory is more a spectacle than a building. Stepping inside is like walking in to a Verdi opera. The acoustics are fabulous, and it is a splendid sight, constructed in wonderful materials, including superb faux marble. I'm not a Roman Catholic, but I've been to many weddings there, and every Christmas I try to attend mass. Although I can't take full Communion, I love the music, and the Renaissance architect strikes a particular chord with me. It contains many elements that, in a reduced form, I might apply to my interiors. The architect Herbert Grubbe was only 29 when he won a competition to design The Oratory, beating many more-established names. He had just converted to Catholicism, which may explain why he chose to work in such an exuberant style. Nina Campbell is one of Britain's leading interior designers. She recently launched her first ever furniture collection, which can be found at her showroom at Bridge Studios, 318-326 Wandsworth Bridge Rd, SW6. Tel: 020 7471 4270.

Lulu Lytle

The best public space is the Egyptian Sculpture Gallery at the British Museum. Although it is very much the contents rather than the interior that thrills me, I relish sitting down and marvelling at the oversized basalt pharaohs and animal gods. I would also nominate Sarah and Christopher Hodson's dining room in Notting Hill—with its dusky pink walls, reminiscent of a faded Roman palace. George Bullock sideboard (aden with dried pufferfish, tombak bowls, English silver candlesticks, paintings by their children and sunlight filtering through the 18th-century blinds hand painted with birds and exotic fruit, the atmosphere is immediately conducive to a long stay. Designer Lulu Lytle set up the company Soane with Christopher Hodson in 1997 to address the demand for bespoke furniture and lighting designs. Their large showroom on Pimlico Road showcases a permanent collection, plus one-off pieces. Soane also works on whole interior design projects. 50 Pimlico Rd, SW1. Tel: 020 7730 6400.



Among interior designer Rabih Hage's choices was the Oyster Bar in Chelsea's Michelin Building, above, which is housed in what Hage describes as "a beautiful building for its period". Philippa Thorp, of Thorp Design, opted for the sci-fi interior of Westminster Underground Station, above centre. "Who can fail to be transfixed by its cathedral-like proportions?" she asks. According to international interior designer Joanna Wood, what is remarkable about Hampton Court Palace, above right, "is the way in which the palace charts the most exciting stages in English interiors".

Philippa Thorp

The new Westminster Underground Station, on the Jubilee Line (underneath Portcullis House) is my interior of choice. By manipulating the space available, architect Michael Hopkins has created unimaginable space, scale and volume. Who could fail to be transfixed by the cathedral-like proportions of the underground station, which uses these qualities to such great effect, as has been achieved before by so many of the world's best architects—Wren, Piranesi, Pisano...? As a design company, Thorp Design strives to accomplish the same critical architectural qualities demonstrated so well here.

Philippa and James Thorp started Thorp Design in 1990, integrating their expertise in architecture and interior design. The majority of their work is in residential property, ranging from the grandiose and traditional through to the unashamedly minimalist and contemporary. They also create interiors for private aircraft and yachts. 10 Peterborough Mews, SW6. Tel: 020 7731 6887.

Rabih Hage

The Cloisters, Westminster Abbey, are a truly surprising interior. Only after walking through the great porch and turning down a small mews do you discover they're there. I also choose the Oyster Bar in the Michelin building on the Fulham Road. Michelin House is well known, but it's still a beautiful building for its period, and it was very sensitively restored and redeveloped. There is also a private apartment in Cambridge Gate, Regent's Park, that deserves a mention. Although it's a redevelopment, planning regulations in London are such that the apartment is very special because it features a listed staircase that couldn't be divided up. Therefore, this ground-floor/basement apartment has, attached to it, a listed staircase, allowing access to a tiny room four floors up with an amazing panoramic view, which is also part of the flat. French-Lebanese interior designer Rabih Hage has just opened his first showroom, which sells exclusive pieces of furniture, lighting and contemporary art, and serves as an exhibition space for new and established designers. 69-71 Sloane Ave, SW3. Tel: 020 7823 8288.

Kelly Hoppen

One of the interiors I know and love in London, and maybe it just stands out to me as astonishing, is the Orangerie in Kensington Gardens. It's so peaceful and light, which is so important these days. Not many people know that it is open for breakfast every morning. For me, it is like being in the middle of the country.

World-renowned British designer Kelly Hoppen has created apartments, houses and yachts for an international list of clients. The recent launch of her very first shop in the heart of Brompton Cross attracted celebrities and design gurus alike, and offers everything a discerning shopper could wish for to deck out the perfect home. Kelly Hoppen Lifestyle Store, 175-177 Fulham Rd, SW3. Tel: 020 7471 3350.

Fiona Campbell

Enveloped in the sacred atmosphere of St Paul's Cathedral, while looking up into its vast dome and listening to sublime music, is something that always offers a deeply profound experience. On a more intimate level, a favourite place to entertain friends is the main Dining Room at the Hurlingham Club in SW6, with its excellent food and discreet service—the view over the croquet lawns and riverside walk offers a very real country-house feel in the heart of London.

Starting as a soft furnishings designer in the King's Road over 35 years ago, Fiona Campbell now heads an interior design outfit. She recently launched a range of upholstered chairs, together with a new furniture showroom. 259 New King's Rd, SW6. Tel: 020 7731 3681.



Stirling Prize-winner Will Alsop, head of Alsop Architects, reckoned that choosing a favourite interior was "subject to occasion and mood", but the imposing, Gothic main hall at the Natural History Museum, above, would certainly be on his shortlist.

David Linley

I first caught a glimpse of 120 Fleet Street when a friend of my father was editor of *The Express*. It was night, when its black, luminous exterior looked particularly impressive. The building is a milestone in architecture and a triumph of inspired and original thinking. It has a wonderful purity of line and simplicity of form that gives it enormous character. After *The Express* moved out in 1989 it was left unoccupied for seven years before being redeveloped for an American bank. Its dazzling reception area has recently been restored to great effect. The starburst ceiling is covered in silver and gold leaf, reflected in the blue-black, wave-effect floor. The building is one of five London landmarks I selected as inspiration for a set of humidors. Our design is homage to Sir Owen Williams, the genius who created this 1930s edifice. Our challenge was to use satinwood to create a finish that evoked the glossy black walls. But the marquetry was the most difficult: it involved bending a veneer to replicate the curved corners. We often create humidors to order—usually for clients' houses. Sometimes we create them from photographs, and sometimes from architects' plans. However, we always get a better result when we visit the building, as was the case with 120 Fleet Street. And, in this instance, we actually chose the building ourselves—simply because we found it to be truly inspirational. David Linley, of the eponymous company known for its fine furniture, has launched several new collections. Visit his showroom to discover more about the 120 Fleet Street humidor and his new lines of furniture, gifts and accessories. 60 Pimlico Rd, SW1. Tel: 020 7730 7300.

Joanna Wood

Hampton Court Palace has always held a certain mystique for me—a vast, multi-faceted, multi-turreted royal palace looming up from the banks of the Thames, intertwined with rich associations of Tudor pageantry, Cardinal Wolsey and the unfortunate Anne Boleyn. However, recently, more frequent visits—as a result of my renovation of a lodge by Sir Christopher Wren, set within the palace grounds—have allowed me to really explore and respond to the interiors. What is truly remarkable is the way in which the palace charts the most exciting and exemplary stages in English interiors—from the dazzling little Wolsey's Closet with its fine, linen-fold panelling and ornate, gilt, gesso ceiling; the dramatic hammer-beam ceiling of the Great Hall; the baroque drama of the King's Staircase, with its murals of the gods and goddesses of Ancient Rome by the celebrated Antonio Verrio; and the sheer splendour of the State Apartments. At every turn and with every visit something new and remarkable attracts one's attention. It is a building that cannot fail to inspire.

One of Britain's leading figures in international interior design, Joanna Wood heads a group of five design-related companies. Her impressive list of private and commercial clients includes Lady "Bubbles" Rothermere, Nigel and Polly Havers, Duke's Hotel St James, The Garrick Club and Taylor Woodrow. For a taste of her style, visit her shop, which sells interior-design accessories and gifts. 48a Pimlico Rd, SW1. Tel: 020 7730 5064.



LOSING OUR RELIGION?

Preparations are already under way for a celebration in 2004. It will mark 1,400 years since London turned away from paganism and converted to the Christian faith. But, in reality, has the city now been reconverted back to paganism? Theo Hobson talks to two of London's spiritual leaders about the Church today.

THE MAJORITY of Londoners are not religious. It appears that London has chosen new gods: money, success, power, pleasure, even celebrity. Traditional-minded clergy might suggest that this city has abandoned its religious heritage and reverted to its dark, pagan past.

Not the Bishop of London, however. "The latest figures suggest that there are around 600,000 people attending Christian worship every week in this Greater London area," he says. "That's an amazing number of people. Especially when you consider all the cultural choice that's become available in recent years."

The Right Reverend Richard Chartres is a large, confident man. He insists that Church membership isn't in decline—at least not in London. "Membership has grown by around 20,000 in the last decade. Twenty years ago, London was at the bottom of the league, and now it's at the top. Partly, this is due to some successful individual churches. Also, a lot of energy has come into the Church from new Londoners. For instance, some of my

best new priests are Nigerian. And there are many strong community churches."

And yet, to most Londoners, the city seems oddly, helplessly secular. In comparison to Victorian times, surely London has lost its Christian identity? In 1842, when the *Illustrated News* was born, the city's religious character seemed secure. As well as being the industrial capital of the world, London had a good claim to being the Christian capital too. Churches were being built at a faster rate than ever.

But beneath the pious surface of Victorian London, its faith was not so clear cut. The historic heartland of the Church of England was the rural parish, and it was slow to adapt to the Industrial Revolution, failing to win the affections of the urban working class. In many areas of the city, the poor were cheerfully indifferent to religion.

During this period there was terrible poverty, despite the great prosperity of the nation. As Peter Ackroyd notes in his biography of London, the city was often seen as pagan, despite its official Christian status. "When the city was described as pagan, it was partly because no one living among such urban suffering could have faith in a god who allowed cities such as London to flourish."

In the course of the 19th century, London's churches adapted to the needs of an industrial society, and began to penetrate the "dark places" on their doormats. The Roman Catholic Church, which was only officially tolerated after 1559, played an important role in alleviating the poverty of London's Irish community. In 1865, a new response to London's social and spiritual poverty was founded by William Booth—the Salvation Army. Thanks to this new church's relentless charitable work, many Londoners were rescued from alcoholism and other vices.

The Bishop of London believes the Victorian era isn't off—it was cracked up to be, spiritually. "Of course London's religious identity has changed, with secularisation and so on. But we shouldn't be too rosy about the Victorian Church. In reality, all the big churches that they built were never filled. And the census of 1851 showed that a great many didn't go to any sort of church at all."

During the 20th century, London's religious character changed. Society in general underwent a process of





With all the cultural choice that's become available, has London in the 20th century become increasingly secular?
Sandy Millar, vicar of the Holy Trinity Brompton, top, and the Bishop of London, above, don't think so—in recent years Church membership has grown and they believe it's an exciting time for the Christian faith.

secularisation. The creation of the welfare state reduced the charitable function of religion, and its role in the local community. Traditionally, it had been the Church that promised to look after us "from the cradle to the grave".

Despite these changes, the Church continued to play a crucial public role, especially in London. It was central to the royal and political pageantry that united the nation at certain important dates: the World Wars, the Queen's Coronation in 1953 and Churchill's funeral.

The Bishop believes the Church's role in public ceremonies and occasions of state is central to its character. "It has this dimension of service to the state, providing the basis for public occasions, and it makes use of national symbols such as St Paul's cathedral. It provides a focus for the national story, for the communal memory. But it's not stuck in the past, it's changing all the time. For instance, in the service that I held to commemorate the anniversary of September 11, there was a very large block of Muslims sitting there in the cathedral. That's an amazing new development. And it's symbolic of what's going on generally, from day to day."

Immigration has been a hugely important factor in London's religious development. There are now about four million people from ethnic minority groups in Britain, and nearly half of them live in London. Some ethnic minority groups are Christian, especially those from the West Indies: they form the greatest part of many London congregations. The rest observe all the major world religions, but the majority are Hindu and Muslim. Consequently, London has seen the building of a number of grand temples and mosques in recent years.

"The Church can provide a meeting place for different religions," says the Bishop. "And it has a history of doing so. For example, London has the longest continuous tradition of Jewish worship in Europe. Also, Christians are working together far better than in previous centuries."

When the Bishop was accounting for the recent growth in London's church membership, he specifically mentioned one church: Holy Trinity Brompton. Since the 1980s, this evangelical church has kept on growing. It now has around 3,000 worshippers every Sunday. In addition, it is the birthplace of the Alpha Course, an informal introduction to "the basics of Christian faith", which is currently taught in 23,000 churches worldwide.

The man responsible for the Alpha Course is Holy Trinity Brompton's vicar, Sandy Millar. He devised it as an introduction for new members of his church. Soon it spread and became a national phenomenon.

The Reverend Millar has an aquiline profile and a military air. His father was in the Scots Guards, and the army seems in his blood. Following an education at Eton and Cambridge, he was at the Bar for 10 years, then in the 1970s became curate at HTB, taking over in 1985.

"It was obvious to me that, unless things changed,

there wouldn't be a Church of England for much longer," he explains when asked about the development of HTB. "The Church was still dominated by its Victorian trappings. And that's a problem, if the people you're trying to speak to are not Victorians. One major difference is in people's attitude to authority. The Victorians believed in truth, and that approach was no longer working. In our age, people want to interact, to have a conversation. They want to know why this matters to their lives."

HTB's success has been in making a connection with people. "A million people in the UK have done Alpha," says Reverend Millar. "It's a very exciting time for the Christian faith in this country."

Reverend Millar clearly understands the religious needs of Londoners, their yearning for a community, especially among the young. "It's undeniable that a basic human need is for community. It's the paradox of a big city: why am I so lonely when I'm surrounded by millions of people? Community is an essential need if society is to function and, interestingly, we're now seeing a recognition of this from the secular authorities. The question is this: is it possible to have a community that is not self-centred, that reflects the universality of the gospel?"

One obvious feature of modern London is its diversity. But HTB takes the existence of other religions in its stride. "We have to declare that the gospel is for everyone. And that doesn't mean imposing Western culture on other traditions. Christianity isn't a Western faith."

Over the past few years there has been criticism of the Alpha movement in the press, especially of its high-profile marketing campaigns. Reverend Millar responds, exasperatedly, "You can't win! If you market yourself effectively, you're selling out, but if you ignore modern communications, then everyone says the Church is out of touch. It's true that Alpha has benefited from brand familiarity. It's a positive thing to raise awareness."

Some people are uneasy about religion acquiring political influence, but, says the Reverend, the Church is called to have an influence on public life. "The great mistake is to say the Church must withdraw to a detached position and leave the politicians and the royals to do what they want. The Church is called to be a blessing to the nation. Of course it must not force itself on the nation, but it must offer itself, for service."

Despite Reverend Millar's criticism of Victorian religion, his church seems to have very traditional features: it emphasises morality, the work ethic, philanthropy, service to the nation. What makes the difference is that now these things come packaged in a language borrowed from the States. It's an interesting cocktail of old and new. There is also something very Victorian about the Bishop of London—especially his confidence that the Church's official, ceremonial function can help to unite the nation. Maybe the Church in London is trying to do something similar to Mrs Thatcher in the 1980s: reinvent Victorian values for our uncertain age.



160 YEARS OF PEACE AND GOODWILL

In the 160 years that *The Illustrated London News* has been producing a special Christmas edition, the festive season has been marked in many different ways. Theo Hobson looks at two aspects of *ILN*'s Yuletide coverage: Christmas during wartime and through the eyes of columnist GK Chesterton.

GK CHESTERTON, one of the foremost literary figures of the early 20th century, wrote a column for *The Illustrated London News* for almost 30 years, beginning in 1907. This was no ordinary column, simply because Chesterton was no ordinary journalist. His voice was totally individual, in its fusion of philosophical depth and absurdist humour.

Almost every year he wrote about Christmas. His ideas about the meaning of Christmas are the embodiment of his entire philosophy. His ideal of Christmas is strongly Dickensian. It is a time of festivity, fun, charity and domestic warmth. These qualities, he feels, are under threat from modern life, which is so serious and self-important. "It is exactly because Christmas is not only a feast of children, but in some sense a feast of fools, that Dickens is in touch with its mystery."

One of his Christmas meditations begins as a satire on intellectual reading habits. He has noticed an advertisement entitled Books Suitable for Christmas Presents, which features some very dull and worthy titles. Nothing could be further from the spirit of Christmas than books of this sort, he declares; and this leads him into a wider reflection.

"There is nothing really wrong with those books except that they do not fit in with Christmas. There is nothing really wrong with the whole modern world except that it does not fit in with Christmas. The modern

world will have to fit in with Christmas or die...No poetry can be appreciated by him who cannot appreciate the mottoes in the crackers. No log-rolling can rescue him who will not roll the Yule log. Christmas is like death and childbirth—a test of our simple virtue; and there is no other such test left in this land today."

This is a theme he often returns to: the traditions of Christmas contain more wisdom than any work of social philosophy. The irrationality of Christmas is wiser than modern reason.

In 1923 he relates his Christmas homily to the recent general election. The political parties present us with a false alternative, he says, and their shortcomings are exposed by "the principle of Christmas". Like the Conservatives, Christmas expresses respect for tradition. Like the Liberals, it emphasises the need for improved social welfare. "In other words, Christmas contains in itself already the two alternative actions toward society—the preservation of what is good in the past, the removal of what is bad in the present."

He often reflected on the gradual secularisation of Christmas. Despite his own strong faith, he was not a strict purist who demands that Christmas is nothing but its traditional religious meaning. But "there comes a point when the essence of the thing has evaporated".



Right, a German soldier, holding a mini Christmas tree and paper lantern, opens the famous truce of 1914. Above, a soldier in the trenches spends Christmas dreaming of his return home. Top, a festive ritual on a ship in the North Sea in 1914, as the captain samples the Christmas pudding.



IN THE 19th and early 20th centuries, the British Empire was a central fact of national life. Naturally enough, every edition of the *ILN* devoted considerable space to the latest news from the Empire, especially in times of crisis and war—and that meant most times. For troops stationed thousands of miles away, and for their families back home, Christmas was an especially poignant time.

The rituals of a traditional British Christmas had to be recreated in distant climes. Surprisingly, the central feature of a traditional

English Christmas was not a tree or a turkey, but a plum pudding. There are countless images of soldiers improvising this central Yuletide ritual feast—a comforting taste of peacetime. Also, these pictures reassured their families and compatriots back home that they were in good spirits.

Such assurance was needed more than ever during World War I, of course. One Christmas tradition was a gift to each soldier from a member of the royal family. In 1915, all received a special gift from Princess



Above, from left to right, General Montgomery's Christmas card from 1943; in 1915, a captured German helmet serves as a cooking pot for the inevitable plum pudding; Christmas at Jellalabad during the war in Afghanistan, 1878. Left, in 1942, soldiers of the Eighth Army enjoy a festive meal in the North African desert, as passing German prisoners look on enviously.

Mary: a box containing cigarettes, tobacco and a pipe. Another report showed patients at a military hospital enjoying a festive concert, starring singing nurses. The wounded soldiers "sit and enjoy a cigarette, or propel themselves in an invalid chair. All listen attentively to the singer, and join vigorously in the choruses of any song they know."

Most famously, Christmas Day of 1914 was the occasion of an impromptu truce in the trenches. "On some sections of the battle front the Germans decorated their trenches with Christmas trees and paper

lanterns, and invited our troops to come over to smoke and have a palaver. With one accord a truce for the night was arranged, and the compliments of the season were passed with much enthusiasm between friend and foe. The cessation of hostilities continued all the next day. Both sides fraternised and spent a Happy Christmas."

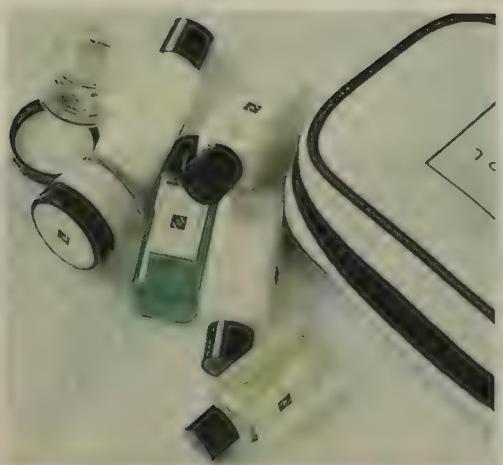
Christmas is the ultimate symbol of peace. For soldiers to celebrate this religious festival is a strange paradox that highlights war's tragedy and humanity's endless hope.

BEST OF BRITISH

Stuck for original stocking fillers or seasonal gift ideas? Be inspired by this selection of top buys from London's hottest labels.



1 HEAVENLY HOME Silver-plated angel candlestick and table setting (£25) at Links of London, 160 Sloane St, SW1 (020 7730 3133) 2 IT'S A WRAP Red, punched-out-suede wrap (£495) by Louise Kennedy, 11 West Halkin St, SW1 (020 7235 0911) 3 ART ATTACK Limited-edition, hand-coloured etching, *Angel Doing Her Hair* (£250), by Anita Klein at www.britart.com 4 OPEN WIDE James the Doorman doorstopper (£14) from Black+Blum, 2.07 Oxo Tower Wharf, SE1 (020 7633 0022) 5 SILK STOCKINGS Handmade, silk-gauze stockings (£40) by Nina Campbell, 9 Walton St, SW3 (020 7225 1011) 6 BOOT CAMP Limited-edition wellington boots (£45) by Thomas Pink, 85 Jermyn St, W1 (020 7498 3882) 7 GREAT ESCAPE In-flight bag of miniature beauty products (£45) by Jo Malone, 150 Sloane St, SW1 (020 7720 0202) 8 SPICED MAGIC Tolu Oriental fragrance with golden frankincense (£78 for 17.5ml) by Ormonde Jayne, The



Royal Arcade, 28 Old Bond St, W1 (020 7499 1100) 9 STAND TALL Leather mobile phone/glasses stand-up case (£70) by William & Son, 10 Mount St, W1 (020 7493 8385) 10 TO DIE FOR Macassar ebony car die with white-leather spots (£65) by Linley, 60 Pimlico Road, SW1 (020 7730 7300) 11 HIGH NOTES Handbag notebooks (£11.90) by Joanna Wood, 48a Pimlico Rd, SW1 (020 7730 5064) 12 TRAVEL MATES Leather-bound atlas and travel journal (£58) by G Ettinger, www.ettinger.co.uk (020 8877 1616) 13 BIG SPENDER Wild Bunch credit-card wallets (£155+VAT) from Cream Designs, www.creamdesigns.com (020 8953 0242) 14 DAYDREAMER Snow-white Dreams and Thoughts notebook (£45) at Smythson of Bond Street, 40 New Bond St, W1 (020 7629 8558) HOPPEN MAD If all else fails, call Kelly Hoppen's Fulham Road lifestyle store, which will deliver individual gift-filled cashmere stockings (020 7351 1910).



ON ANY normal day, take a stroll along London's South Bank and you are sure to pass a human statue or two. There is the fairy who stands to attention like a powder box ballerina, or the stone man who suddenly jerks to life, bowing and waving. Dotted about nearby are other performers—a violinist, busking by the second-hand book stall; a fire juggler warming up the tunic to Waterloo. Over in the marketplace at Covent Garden, clowns, jugglers, musicians and acrobats are busy whipping up their audiences into a frenzy—or at least enough enthusiasm to part with a few coins.

Street entertainment is alive and well, in London. Despite its many rivals for attention—most of all television and cinema—old-fashioned busking is a thriving art form, one that is now recognised as bona fide entertainment rather than a public nuisance. Local councils have begun to encourage rather than penalise genuine performers, and recently National Lottery money was given to a school for street entertainers in an acknowledgement of its role in the arts world.

But busking is nothing new. Way back in medieval times, street entertainers, whose work has been dubbed the "second oldest profession in the world", plied their trade wherever a crowd gathered—at festivals, markets and fairs. There were all manner of performers—jesters, musicians, mummers, tumblers, dancers, magicians, mountebanks, pantaloons, prattlers, acrobats, stooges, quacks, puppeteers and clowns.

One of the most famous displays of talent was at Smithfield, in central London, where St Bartholomew's Fair first took root in the early 16th century. A cross between a supermarket and Glastonbury Festival, the Fair's most organised form of theatre was

From the rigorous control of the human statue, above, to the spectacular effects of the fire-eater, right, London's street entertainers have been plying their trade since medieval times.



WHAT A PERFORMANCE

From its earliest incarnation at bawdy medieval fairs, such as St Bartholomew's, to the organised chaos at Covent Garden today, street theatre has always played a dramatic role in London's cultural scene, says Theo Hobson.

the Miracle Plays, open-air dramatisations of Bible stories. Most of the entertainment on offer was far less pious, however, and even less organised, although it included a "whirligig", or Ferris wheel—an early model for the London Eye. In the early 19th century, shortly before *The ILN* was born, the wonders of St Bartholomew's Fair were recorded by the poet William Wordsworth, who saw "chattering monkeys dangling from their poles...the Stone-eater, the Man that swallows fire", and plenty more. The whole spectacle was a symbol of London—its bewildering variety, its crazy vitality.

"It is impossible to overestimate the thirst for spectacle among Londoners throughout many centuries," says Peter Ackroyd, leading historian of the city. He points out that London's theatre was not confined to entertainment—the pageantry of monarchs and state occasions had tremendous dramatic value and fired the imaginations of ordinary Londoners. Also, a grim form of theatre surrounded London's public executions, which took place on a stage in front of huge crowds. Some of the cruelty of urban life was reflected in the street spectacles, including Punch and Judy puppet shows. And, indeed, many London theatres are thought to have evolved from bear-baiting and cockfighting rings.

The strange world of street theatre was recorded by many 17th- and 18th-century writers and artists, including Hogarth and Dickens. In *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Dickens affectionately portrayed the life of a Punch-and-Judy man. In fact, his whole style of writing is strongly influenced by the theatre, and he often likens London to one big street performance.

The Victorian sociologist Henry Mayhew, in his famous study of London working life, noted that street performers, or "mummers" as he called them, were "the poorest, flashiest, and most independent race of men going...The generality of them is cobblers' lads, and tailors' apprentices, and clerks". At this time, the barrel organ was a regular feature of London street life, particularly associated with poor continental immigrants—the asylum seekers of the day. It was sometimes the accompaniment to a puppet show, and sometimes provided the music for troupes of dancing girls. By 1860, the craze had got out of hand and a law was passed to restrict street music—but it was not effectively enforced. London has never succeeded in silencing its buskers.

Music remains the commonest form of street entertainment today. At the lowest end of the scale, this might just mean someone inexpertly strumming a guitar. But at the top end, there are quality performances, often influenced by music hall and vaudeville. Unusual instruments, such as spoons, saws and didgeridoos, vie for attention among the more usual banjos, mouth organs and guitars. In recent years, classical music has become just as popular: string quartets and soloists often set up their stands on the pavement to launch into Vivaldi's popular *Four Seasons*.

Miming and clowning are the next favourite street-entertainment vocations. Our friend the stone statue, who works the South Bank, has been doing this job on and off for six years. "As long as it's good weather you'll find me here most days." Standing still for such long stretches of time must be hard work. "It is, but I do yoga, which helps. I really enjoy it."

The South Bank boasts plenty of live outdoor action, not just from buskers. The National Theatre regularly lays on free, open-air performances, mostly for children. One of this year's acts was top clown Fraser Hooper. Fraser started his clowning career in a double act, but nowadays he prefers to perform at organised events—festivals and so on—rather than on the street. He explains that in busking (known in the trade as "working the street") you rely on what the



PHILIPPE LOUYS/LEADER

Busking, the commonest form of street entertainment, can range from an inexpertly strummed guitar to a string trio playing classical music, right. Pavement artists, top, and clowns with a talent for balloon modelling, above, are also often seen "working the street" in what has been termed "the second-oldest profession".



NICHOLAS BAILEY/REX

The Punch and Judy show, which originated in Italy in the 14th century, became a popular entertainment for children, despite, or maybe because of, the liberal dose of violence it dispensed.

audience pays you (your "hat")—so you have to structure your show around persuading them to pay. "It's a particular skill, and it's possible to make a big hat working the street, but I found that the element of hard sell gets in the way of what I want to do."

Bill Gee, who runs the Independent Street Artists' Network, offers further insights into the busking world. His organisation promotes street artists, especially to local councils and shopping centres. Over the last decade or so the scene has changed radically. "There's been a move away from busking in the old sense as a result of tighter laws against it and more private ownership of public space. Technically, most of the street performers in London are illegal, and in some areas local by-laws are tightly applied. But the upside is that more private bodies and local councils are keen to fund performers." So, has street performance become a stable career option? "Well, that depends. To make a good living from it, you have to work hard. And you won't make a fortune, compared with working in the City—but you'll probably have more fun."

Of course, there are still plenty of performers who rely on traditional busking for their income. Their principal home is Covent Garden. Paul, 32, is a clown-cum-acrobat from Australia, who has been working for a few months. "I'm living from hand to mouth at the moment," he tells me, "and you have to work pretty hard at this to make it pay. Sometimes I get a good hat, sometimes only enough for my bus fare home, but I love it."

At Covent Garden the busking is organised—you can't just turn up and expect to perform. "You have to get here at seven in the morning and book a pitch for later in the day," explains Paul. "Sometimes there are 20 people queuing, but it's a really friendly community—everyone knows each other. You see the same faces at festivals all over the world—there was recently one in Auckland, New Zealand."

Another Covent Garden regular is The Great Dave. He also performs at festivals and events, "but I prefer to pass the hat—it's a tradition of street theatre, isn't it?" He says the authorities at Covent Garden are a bit wary of street entertainers. "They find us hard to deal with. We're not organised like other professions, we don't have a boss they can talk to. I guess they find us a bit uncontrollable." There is a hint of pride here, that the anarchic spirit of Smithfield lives on.

Dave performs his show on the cobblestones in front of the grand, pillared frontage of St Paul's church. An audience quickly gathers, mostly of young tourists. At one point, he tries a bit of audience participation and asks them a question, but there is a rather muted response. "May I remind you," he shouts at them, feigning anger, "that this is live! You're not at home watching television. I'm here talking to you." The reproach seems to work: on their next cue the audience lets out a big, happy shout. It's clear that one of the capital's oldest forms of entertainment is alive and kicking, and coming to a street near you.



JOHN BOLDON/COLLECTIONS

RATHER TO its surprise, London has found itself one of the great powerhouses of contemporary art. Invariably of its sculptors—Caro, Long, Flanagan, Levenson—it has long been sought after by international museums; now other artists, often conceptual in approach, are the vogue.

The change has happened in the last 10 years, thanks to the coming together of a powerful and authoritative advocate—Sir Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate galleries—and two great manipulators of the media, the collector-dealer Charles Saatchi and gallery owner Jay Jopling. The three helped to create the Young British Artists (YBAs), marketing such egos as Damien Hirst, Rachel Whiteread, Sarah Lucas and Tracey Emin. And now, a younger generation of artist is taking advantage of the hype to consolidate London's reputation.

What is unusual about the phenomenon is that no one, not least the artists, is afraid of money, and the possibility of art as an investment. The shouting that greeted Martin Creed's victory as artist of the year at the 2001 Turner Prize ceremony came mainly from collectors calculating the profit they suddenly saw in the screwed-up, tossed-away, but of course carefully manipulated, balls of paper that Creed had sold for around £100 five years ago.

But how do you find good contemporary art and what can you expect to pay? Let's look back to the 1990s when advertising magnate and collector Charles Saatchi (*superstar*, *animator*) dominated what became known as the YBAs. They were acquired and marketed almost wholesale, but Saatchi ensured that their often bizarre creations were talked about far beyond narrow artistic circles. Quickly spotting a trend, Christie's auction house re-presented the way in which it dealt with contemporary art in 1998, and it now holds two sales a year.

Works by the YBAs now sell for five, or even six, figures. The most notorious, Damien Hirst, shocked the public with his dissected cadavers, but he is better

Tim Stoner, pictured in front of one of his canvases, *Gabard*, was nominated with the Beck's Futures 2 award in April 2001.

YOUNG MASTERS

London's buzzy East End boasts the largest concentration of artists in Europe. Antony Thorncroft picks out tomorrow's YBAs.

known for his dot paintings, the younger brother of pop art. These still appear frequently in the saleroom, in varying sizes, working out at around £6,000 per dot. Another headline-snatching YBA, Tracey Emin, set herself a new record at Christie's when an installation piece, *Exorcism of Everything I Ever Painted*, sold for £108,000, and this February the star turn was Peter Doig, whose *Thirteen (Fool Painting)* went for £92,000.

But there is already a feeling that the YBAs are becoming old hat. Contemporary art, like the pop world it tries to emulate, has become a victim of fashion, with trends changing more rapidly than in the past. A new generation of young artists is emerging, and the CAS, a charity devoted to supporting contemporary art, helps





their cause by arranging monthly bus tours to new shows in and around London.

There are plenty of galleries to visit. In the 1990s, dealers specialising in contemporary art opened up alongside the traditional galleries. One of the first was Anthony Reynolds in Mayfair, who began by picking promising talent at the art-school degree shows. (This is still the best way of acquiring the work of potentially major artists at rock-bottom prices, and shows such as that held at the Royal College of Art each June are thronged with knowing collectors.) One of Reynolds' first protégés was Mark Wallinger, whose sculpture, *Ecce Homo*, was chosen in 1999 to fill the vacant plinth in Trafalgar Square for a year. A major piece by Wallinger now sells for up to £100,000.

"What has changed," says Reynolds, "is that artists such as Mark are not confining themselves to one medium any more. The most inventive are often working in several media at the same time. And you'll find foreign artists who have settled here because of the environment and the strength of the market. Among Reynolds' names to watch are multimedia artists Keith Farquar and Keith Tyson, whose work can cost from £7,000 for a small print to £100,000 for a large installation, and a young Japanese artist, Nobuko Tsuchiya, whose work is so new that it has yet to find a price."

Also one to watch is David Austen, a painter who has been with Reynolds since leaving the Royal College. "High rents are forcing artists further and further out of the centre of London," says Austen, whose studio is part of a cooperative group in Bermondsey. "But you can find the complete range of art, from the expensive to the good young artists who are still dirt cheap."

The received wisdom is that you should not make friends with artists. "You love the art, not the artists," said Andy Warhol, who famously shunned collectors. Austen does not agree. "I'm pleased to invite anyone to my studio who is interested in my work, and you will find many artists are happy to make their own deals." Watch out also for abstract artist Zebedee Jones; George Shaw, who paints townscapes in enamel; and landscape artist Elizabeth McGill (all tipped by the CAS as artists to watch).

Installations and conceptual works can cause problems for would-be collectors. For a start, they are usually made by technicians—the artist just has the idea—and are often too large for the home. However, modern lofts and apartments often offer enough domestic space to

show off such works, and the artist will always help set them up.

The latest trend is photography, now firmly established as a contemporary art form. Elton John owns over 2,500 photographs, from homoerotic works by Richard Mapplethorpe to the photo-realist Nan Goldin. Saatchi now collects photographs, and Jopling handles the works of photographers. The lines between fashion photography and art are becoming blurred—a Stephen Meisel fashion shoot for Versace, for instance, ended up displayed in Jopling's gallery with price tags of around £10,000 an image.

The most expensive item at Christie's last contemporary auction was *Untitled V* by German photographer Andreas Gursky, which made £433,000. Richard Billingham, whose work costs between £4,000 and £20,000, just missed out on the Turner. Like most artist photographers, he produces limited editions, perhaps a dozen prints of an image, to ensure comparative exclusivity.

Painting is also making a comeback. The Angela Flowers Gallery followed the artists to the East End and, according to Matthew Flowers: "Tate Modern and



Hot on the heels of Young British Artists such as Tracey Emin, a younger generation is consolidating London's reputation for contemporary art. Together with photography, painting is making a comeback in the art world, with canvases such as *The Silence of the Day* by Lucy Jones, top, proving popular with buyers. Another name to watch out for is Gary Webb, a sculptor responsible for such neon creations as *Heart and Soul*, above.



Saatchi are rather behind the times. They are still fixated with the YBAs and ignore some of the fantastic new work being done. It's not necessary to shock any more." He points to portraits by Tai-Shan Schierenberg that sell for between £2,500 and £30,000, or the strong works by Lucy Jones, which sell for £1,500 to £18,000. Of the younger artists, Flowers selects Jiro Osuga, whose humorous canvases fetch around £5,000, and Freya Payne, whose paintings achieve up to £5,000.

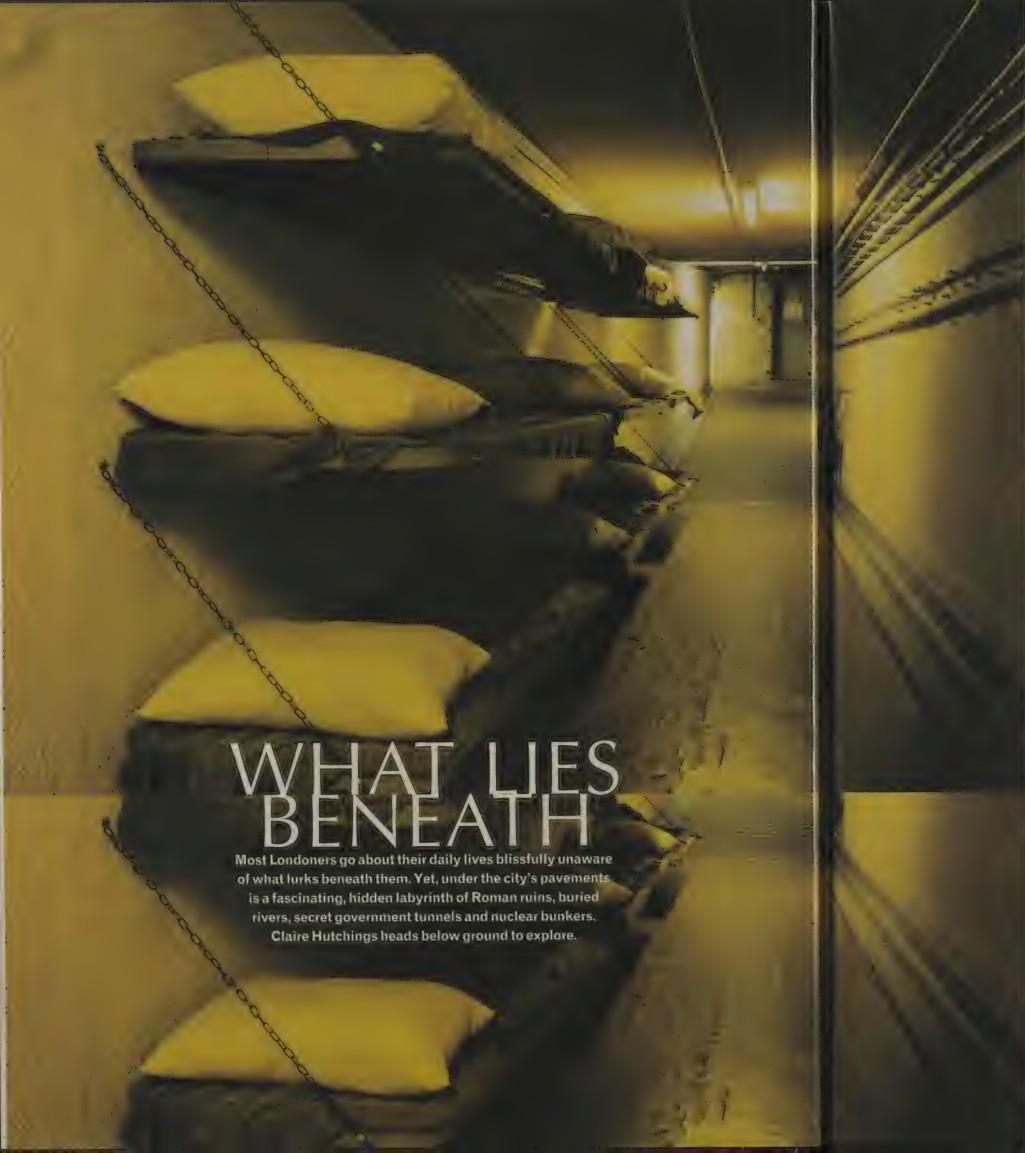
Also in the East End is The Approach, a pub in Bethnal Green with a large gallery space, started by artist Jake Miller. "It took a year but we now have some exciting names," he says. One, Michael Raedecker, was shortlisted for the Turner in 2000, but others to watch

include conceptual artist Emma Kay, painter Tim Stoner and sculptor Gary Webb.

To see the work of artists en masse you can hardly beat the Art Fair at the Islington Business Design Centre in January, or the CAS' own show in April, ARTfutures. Dealers will tell you that buying art as an investment is likely to prove bitterly disappointing in the contemporary sector, which is so prone to changes in fashion, but if you insist they will give a lead on what might appreciate. The advice from both artists and dealers is to take your time, tour galleries and fairs at leisure, and form your own idea of what you like.

Anthony Reynolds, tel: 020 7439 2201; Angela Flowers Gallery, tel: 020 8985 3333; CAS, tel: 020 7831 7311.

One to watch: David Austen, whose work includes *Glass*, above.



WHAT LIES BENEATH

Most Londoners go about their daily lives blissfully unaware of what lurks beneath them. Yet, under the city's pavements is a fascinating, hidden labyrinth of Roman ruins, buried rivers, secret government tunnels and nuclear bunkers.

Claire Hutchings heads below ground to explore.

SUBTERRANEAN LONDON has slowly emerged over the last 2,000 years, since the Romans established a settlement on the Thames, in 43AD. But the fury of underground activity really began in the 1800s as the Victorians looked down to solve London's problems of overcrowding, traffic and poor sanitation. After the first tunnel was built under the city's major obstacle—the Thames—in the 1840s, there was no stopping the ambitious engineers of the time, who began moving many of the city's services, including railways and roads, underground. Without their foresight, life on the surface would be even more congested, polluted and uncomfortable today.

During World War II, many of London's hidden features came to prominence as tube stations, crypts and cellars were transformed into shelters, while new deep-level fortresses were built far away from the battles being fought above ground. Today, as London continues to expand upwards and outwards, so its roots spread downwards. The 50-mile London Water Ring Main and the Jubilee Line extension opened recently, while the new Channel Tunnel Rail Link is progressing fast.

If you'd like to take a glimpse below ground, many of London's subterranean features are open to the public. Join us as we guide you to the best underground attractions in and near the capital.

Kelvedon Hatch Secret Nuclear Bunker

Behind the doors of an inconspicuous bungalow in the Essex countryside lies an underground maze of rooms, as deep as 100ft underground, designed as a secret government base in the event of a major nuclear attack. Built in 1952, during the Cold War, the bunker would have housed up to 600 government, military and civilian personnel. Protected with 10ft-thick reinforced-concrete walls, and blast doors made from tank metal, it was designed to be entirely self-sufficient for three months and has its own water supply, electricity generators, telephone exchange and hospital.

A 400ft-long tunnel leads from the bungalow entrance into the deepest of the three floors, where there is a BBC studio, which would have broadcast emergency news to the nation, a monitoring centre for tracking nuclear blasts and predicting fallout, and a plant room where air was filtered and recycled. Above the government administration rooms on the second floor are the canteen, dormitories, washrooms, a small surgery and a bedroom for the prime minister.

Kelvedon Hatch Secret Nuclear Bunker, Kelvedon Hatch Lane, Brentwood, Essex. Tel: 01277 364883; www.apar.demon.co.uk. Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm (3pm weekends and bank holidays); Nov-Mar, Thu-Sun 10am-4pm. Groups by appointment any time. Adults £5, children £3.

Roman London's Amphitheatre

Over 2,000 years after it first threw open its doors to the public, London's only Roman amphitheatre, located below the Guildhall Art Gallery, has finally reopened. When remains of the stadium were unearthed in 1988, in front of Guildhall, the home of the Corporation of London, it was considered to be one of the most important finds of the century. "People had been searching for the amphitheatre for hundreds of years, and suddenly there it was," explains Nick Bateman, director of the team of archaeologists from the Museum of London who made the discovery. "The most amazing thing was that no one had realised it was there before. After all, how can you lose a building the size of a football pitch?"

The painstaking excavation and conservation of the amphitheatre continued while the new art gallery was built around the ruins. The excavated remains include the amphitheatre's eastern gate, through which gladiators and condemned criminals would have passed before entering the arena, and the curved arena walls, which have been dramatically lit and the tiers recreated in wire frame drawings projected on to black glass screens. The amphitheatre, which would have seated up to



Previous page, tiered bunks in the entrance tunnel to Kelvedon Hatch Nuclear Bunker. Top, the back end of the second Channel Tunnel drilling machine, Bertha, under construction. Above, Churchill's Cabinet War Rooms, in King Charles Street, just around the corner from Downing Street. Right, an artist's interpretation of the Thames Tunnel, which linked Rotherhithe to Wapping. Opened in 1825, the tunnel was never actually used by vehicles, as funds needed to construct the necessary roadway approaches were not forthcoming.

7,000 spectators (a quarter of the Roman city's population), was built in about 70AD and was used until the fourth century. There is almost certainly more of the stadium lying buried under the foundations of Guildhall and the nearby church of St Lawrence Jewry.

Roman London's Amphitheatre is accessed via the Guildhall Art Gallery, Guildhall Yard, EC2. Tel: 020 7332 3700. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm; Sun noon-4pm (last admission 30 minutes before the advertised closing time). Adults £2.50, concessions £1, children free.

Thames Tunnel

Situated in the quiet streets of smart, converted warehouses in Rotherhithe is a disused shaft that was, until recently, scrawled with graffiti, overgrown with weeds and topped by litter. Hard to imagine that, 150 years ago, thousands of people flocked here daily to descend the shaft's spiral staircase and see one of the great modern wonders—the first underwater tunnel in the world.

Built by Marc and Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the 1,200ft Thames Tunnel, from Rotherhithe to Wapping, is considered to be one of the greatest engineering feats of all time. The achievement was so significant that it resulted in a wave of tunnelling that was to change the face of London.

"The technique devised by Marc Brunel to build the Thames Tunnel paved the way for every tunnel excavated underwater ever since, including the Channel Tunnel," explains Robert Hulse, the chairman of trustees of the Brunel Engine House, located next to the shaft. Now, plans are afoot to convert the 50ft wide by 40ft deep shaft into a vertical museum. "Volunteers and local children have helped clean up the shaft's exterior, but our ultimate aim is to use the shaft to tell the dramatic story of the tunnel and to celebrate the lives of two of the world's greatest engineers," says Hulse.

In the early 1800s, East London's rapid growth as a port urgently required a new road link between the north and south shores of the Thames. A bridge was rejected because it would have had to be high enough to clear the masts of ships, and the technology for a bascule bridge, like that used later on Tower Bridge, was not sufficiently advanced. Two previous attempts to dig a tunnel under the Thames had failed, and it wasn't until 1825 that a French engineer, named Marc Isambard Brunel, finally found a way to build under the soft river bed.

Marc invented a tunnel shield, a giant iron box comprising 36 individual compartments that could be pushed forward through gooey soil. Each cell held a miner who scooped away at the mud; while the machine held up the soft soil, workers lined the tunnel walls with brick. Work on the tunnel began on March 2, 1825, with the sinking of the shaft at Rotherhithe. Blighted by floods, accidents and financial problems, the tunnel took 18 years to complete (15 years longer than estimated), cost a staggering £614,000 and resulted in the loss of 11 lives. When the tunnel opened on March 25, 1843, 50,000 people walked through it in the first 24 hours. Unfortunately, insufficient funds meant the planned spiral roadway approaches, which would have enabled vehicular traffic to use the tunnel and render it economically viable, were never constructed.

"The tunnel was the Millennium Dome of its day," says Hulse. "Although it never fulfilled its original function as a road tunnel, it remained a curiosity, drawing visitors from all over Europe. Stalls were set up in alcoves running along its length, and it even hosted an annual underwater fair. As it lost its novelty value, it became a popular haunt for prostitutes, beggars and criminals."

In September 1865, the tunnel was sold to the East London Railway for £200,000, and four years later the first train ran through it. Today, it is used by the East London branch of the London Underground, and the northern shaft is the entrance to Wapping station. "The Rotherhithe shaft is the oldest section of the first tunnel under a river. It was also the only project where father and son worked together, and it launched the career of Isambard, who went on to design the Tamar and Clifton suspension bridges, the SS *Great Britain* and the Great Western Railway. Until plans for the new museum are approved, visitors can enjoy the small exhibition at the neighbouring Brunel Engine House, the building that contained the steam engines that drained the tunnel."

Brunel Engine House, Railway Avenue, SE16. Tel: 020 7231 3840. Apr-Oct, weekends 1-5pm; Nov-Mar first Sunday of every month. Other times by appointment. Adults £2, concessions £1.

Cabinet War Rooms

As 1938 drew to a close and war seemed increasingly inevitable, a humble storage basement around the corner from 10 Downing Street was chosen as the location of the government's secret headquarters for the duration of World War II. The complex became so essential to the government that, in 1941, it was extended to three times its original size with the addition of a private dining room, kitchen and bedroom for the Churchill family. Meanwhile, typists, senior civil servants and generals alike slept in a basement, known as "the dock", when the streets were considered too dangerous for them to make their journey home.

Despite the relative luxuries of the prime ministerial quarters, Churchill himself spent as little time as possible underground. However, after 10 Downing Street was badly damaged in October 1940, he began to use the Cabinet War Rooms on a more regular basis. He took his afternoon naps



in his subterranean bedroom, obtained daily updates on the war from the central map room, and used his "hotline" to US president Franklin Roosevelt in the transatlantic telephone room.

In spring 2003, the area of the Cabinet War Rooms open to the public will double in size with the opening of the restored private rooms of the Churchill family and cabinet ministers. A museum celebrating the life and times of Sir Winston Churchill is due to open here in 2005 to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the end of the war and the 40th anniversary of Churchill's death.

Cabinet War Rooms, Clive Steps, King Charles Street, SW1. Tel: 020 7930 6961; www.iwm.org.uk. Daily Oct-Apr, 10am-5.15pm; May-Sept, 9.30am-5.15pm. Adults £5.80, senior citizens £4.20, children free.



Channel Tunnel Rail Link

Nearly 80ft below ground, a giant drill, the length of a football pitch, is currently boring its way under London to complete the final section of the Channel Tunnel high-speed rail link. Working 24 hours a day, the £6.5m machine will complete the five-mile journey from Stratford, east London, to St Pancras by mid-2004. The Channel Tunnel Rail Link is the final stage of the £5.3 billion, 68-mile line from Folkestone to London, the first major railway line built in Britain since Victorian times. When the Stratford-St Pancras line is complete in 2007, it will cut up to 45 minutes off the current journey time from London to Paris of the high-speed Eurostar services to just two hours and 15 minutes.

St Pancras Visitor Centre, Brill Place (off Midland Road), NW1. Tel: 020 7692 8857. Mon-Fri 9am-5pm.

Chislehurst Caves

Although a tour of this former chalk mine in Kent is less sensational than it used to be (visitors are no longer invited to admire "the fossilised remains of an ichthyosaurus", which turned out to be a piece of flint), a trip through a section of the 22 miles of labyrinthine tunnels is an interesting way to spend an hour or so. Since they were last mined in the 1830s, the caves have hosted underground concerts and been used as an ammunitions depot, a mushroom farm and an air-raid shelter.

The tour covers about a mile of the caves, which are atmospherically lit by flickering paraffin lamps, and enlivened by the recreation of the arrangements for wartime shelterers. The displays include a typical family "berth" (an area of about three square metres hollowed out of the rock face and fitted with bunk beds), an underground cinema and the cave infirmary, where a baby girl, christened Cavina in Chislehurst's honour, was born during the war.

Archaeologists may have scuppered rumours that the caves were a place of druidical sacrifice, but thrill-seekers will be pleased to discover that there is one horror story that has yet to be disproved. As visitors turn from a narrow passageway into a larger cavern, the echo that has accompanied them throughout the tour suddenly disappears. This is the "haunted chamber", where a woman was reportedly drowned.

Chislehurst Caves, Old Hill, Chislehurst, Kent. Tel: 020 8467 3264; www.chislehurstcaves.co.uk. Daily 10am-4pm during school holidays and half-terms (except Christmas); Wed-Sun at all other times. Adults £4, OAPs and under 16s £2, children under 5 free.



Top, now restored to its 1920s art-deco splendour, the ballroom at the Park Lane Hotel became London's most luxurious air-raid shelter during World War II. Above, the 22 miles of labyrinthine tunnels that constitute Chislehurst Caves in Kent, a former chalk mine, were also put to good use during the war, providing shelter for local families, complete with an infirmary and cinema.

The Ballroom

Considered to be one of the city's smartest venues in the 1920s, the ballroom at the Park Lane Hotel in Mayfair became London's most luxurious air-raid shelter during World War II when Winston Churchill chose it as a substitute Houses of Parliament if Westminster was bombed. Located two floors underground, with a secret passage to Green Park, its exquisite art-deco interior, with silver-gilded portals, was restored to its former glory in 1996 by designers Hirsch Bedner. A much sought-after location for TV and films, it has appeared in *Brideshead Revisited* and James Bond's *Goldeneye*.
The ballroom at Park Lane Sheraton Hotel, Piccadilly, W1. Tel: 020 7499 6521.

Further reading

London UnderLondon: A Subterranean Guide by Richard Trench and Ellis Hillman (John Murray, £15.99).
Subterranean City: Beneath the Streets of London by Antony Clayton (Historical Publications, £15.95).



SARASIN

Basel Geneva Lugano Zurich
Edinburgh Guernsey Hamburg Hong Kong London
Luxembourg Munich Singapore

www.sarasin.ch

Professionalism, total commitment and cohesive thinking. These are the qualities we draw on to represent your interests on the world's markets.

PERFECTIONIST.

Thank you for sharing our belief
that nothing less than
perfection will do.



Georg F. Krayer
Bank Sarasin & Co. Ltd

ECCENTRIC LONDON



Forget the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey and the National Gallery. There is another London, one that is seldom depicted on postcards or T-shirts. Head off the beaten track for gems of London's history, art and architecture. Even hardened Londoners are unlikely to know about many of these weird and wonderful sights. Ben le Vay picks some of the strangest.

TREE OF LIGHT Pierre Vivant's strange and unexpected work is at Heron Quay in East London, just south of the Westferry Circus gallows-way to the Isle of Dogs. It features more than 75 sets of traffic lights and seems designed to give oncoming drivers apoplexy. Is it an emblem for Ken Livingstone's plans to inconvenience London's motorists? *Heron Quay Roundabout, Canary Wharf, E14.*

THIS HOUSE IS NOT A HOME If you deal with anyone who gives a London address at 23 or 24 Leinster Gardens, beware! The two houses appear there in the right sequence, but they are a mere facade without foundations or substance—even the windows have been painted on. When the building of the gracious, five-storey terrace was interrupted in 1865 for the South Kensington extension of the new-fangled underground railway, property owners demanded that instead of a yawning gap over the railway track, a phoney frontage be erected to hide the rude intrusion. At first glance, you hardly notice the join, though from the back—it's between Bayswater and Paddington stations—the thing looks like a film set. *23/24 Leinster Gdns, W2.*

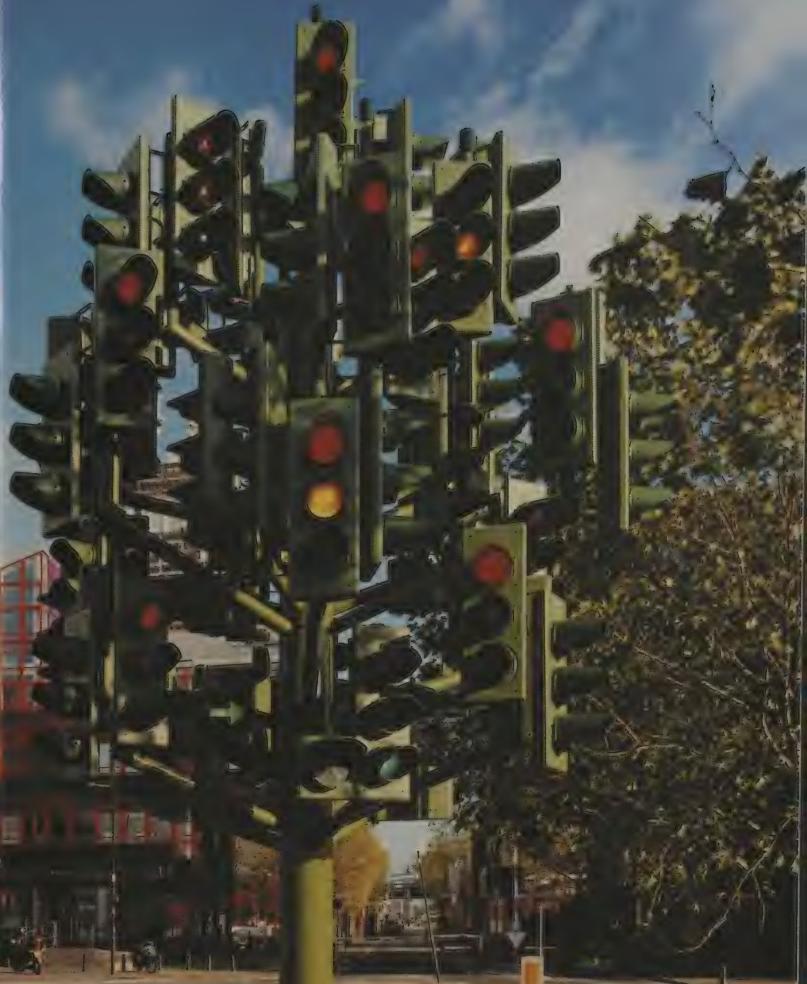
WHEN I'M CLEANING WINDOWS Standing outside Capital House, next to the entrance to Edgware Road tube station, is a window cleaner frozen in time by sculptor Allan Sly. Besides having a comic, almost Laurel & Hardy jauntiness, it depicts the guy looking quizzically up at the vast expanse of glass that makes up Capital House—a daunting prospect. Or maybe his look is one of pride at having finished cleaning the windows—we'll never know. The two bronze passengers waiting for a train on Brixton station platform are another good example of quirky, urban sculpture. *Edgware Rd, W2, and Brixton, SW9, underground stations.*

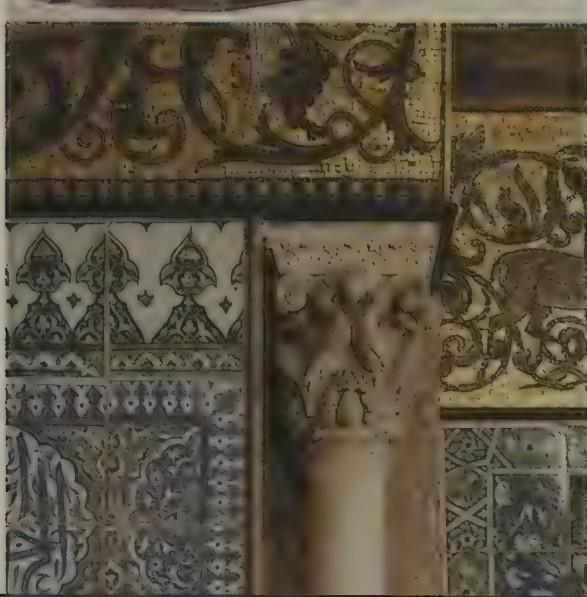
A CRAZY COLLECTION One of London's smallest and strangest museums is the Cuming Museum in Southwark. Among thousands of bizarre objects is a scalp from the South Sea Islands; a piece of the ceiling from the room where Napoleon died in St Helena; a lock of hair and part of a waistcoat belonging to Charles—I—the list goes on and on. Richard Cuming was a Victorian eccentric who couldn't stop amassing odd objects from all over the world. It was all the fault of his aunt, who gave him three fossils when he was five years old. When it opened in 1906, the collection was billed as "the British Museum in miniature". *Cuming Museum, first floor, Newington Library building, 155-157 Walworth Rd, SE17. Tel: (020) 7701 1342.*

MOORISH PARADISE This lesser-known wonder was the home of Frederic, Lord Leighton, the great Victorian artist and President of the Royal Academy. In the middle of a quiet road, this truly extraordinary house has been called "the secret heart of Kensington". Here, for no admission fee, you can experience the beguiling charm of the exotic, bejewelled Arab Hall, where Leighton's unique collection of Moorish tile-work is masterfully displayed, complete with tinkling fountain and a lofty dome described in its day as the eighth wonder of the world. Leighton, whose career received a huge boost when Queen Victoria bought one of his pictures in 1855, was



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID MCKEE





made a peer—the only artist so honoured—shortly before his death in 1896. *Leighton House Museum, 12 Holland Park Rd, Kensington, W14. Tel: 020 7602 3316.*

ARABIAN KNIGHTS The most eccentric tomb in London must be that of Sir Richard Burton (the explorer, not the actor). In commemoration of his travels in Arabia, it is a full-scale Arab sheikh's tent—complete with stone folds of cloth that seem to flap in a desert breeze—in a sleepy corner of St Mary Magdalen churchyard in suburban Mortlake. A ladder leads up to a window high in the tent's roof, enabling one to peer at the coffins of Burton and his wife, surrounded by some of their favourite objects from his explorations. *St Mary Magdalen church, 63 North Worples Way, Mortlake, SW14.*

ARK-TECTURE A superb apparition next to the thundering A4 flyover in Hammersmith, this highly unusual building offers changing and different vistas from any direction. The Ark's oval shape fits between the Hammersmith flyover and the tube tracks—a brilliant piece of urban improvisation. It has its critics as well as fans and was once voted one of the ugliest buildings in Britain, but many think it's a welcome alternative to the predictable shape of most modern offices. *The Ark, 201 Talgarth Rd, W6.*

TURKISH DELIGHT Never has a piece of Oriental architecture looked so out of place as the former Turkish baths in Bishopsgate Churchyard. This Grade II-listed building—constructed in 1894 to house the baths—looks like a model for the Brighton Pavilion that has somehow gone astray. Built in 1894 by Harold Elphick in an utterly Ottoman style to complement its intended use, in latter years it has become the venue for a variety of restaurants. Everything around it has been bombed or redeveloped several times, but it's still charmingly here, defiantly different. *Former Turkish baths, 7-8 Bishopsgate Churchyard, near Liverpool St, EC2.*

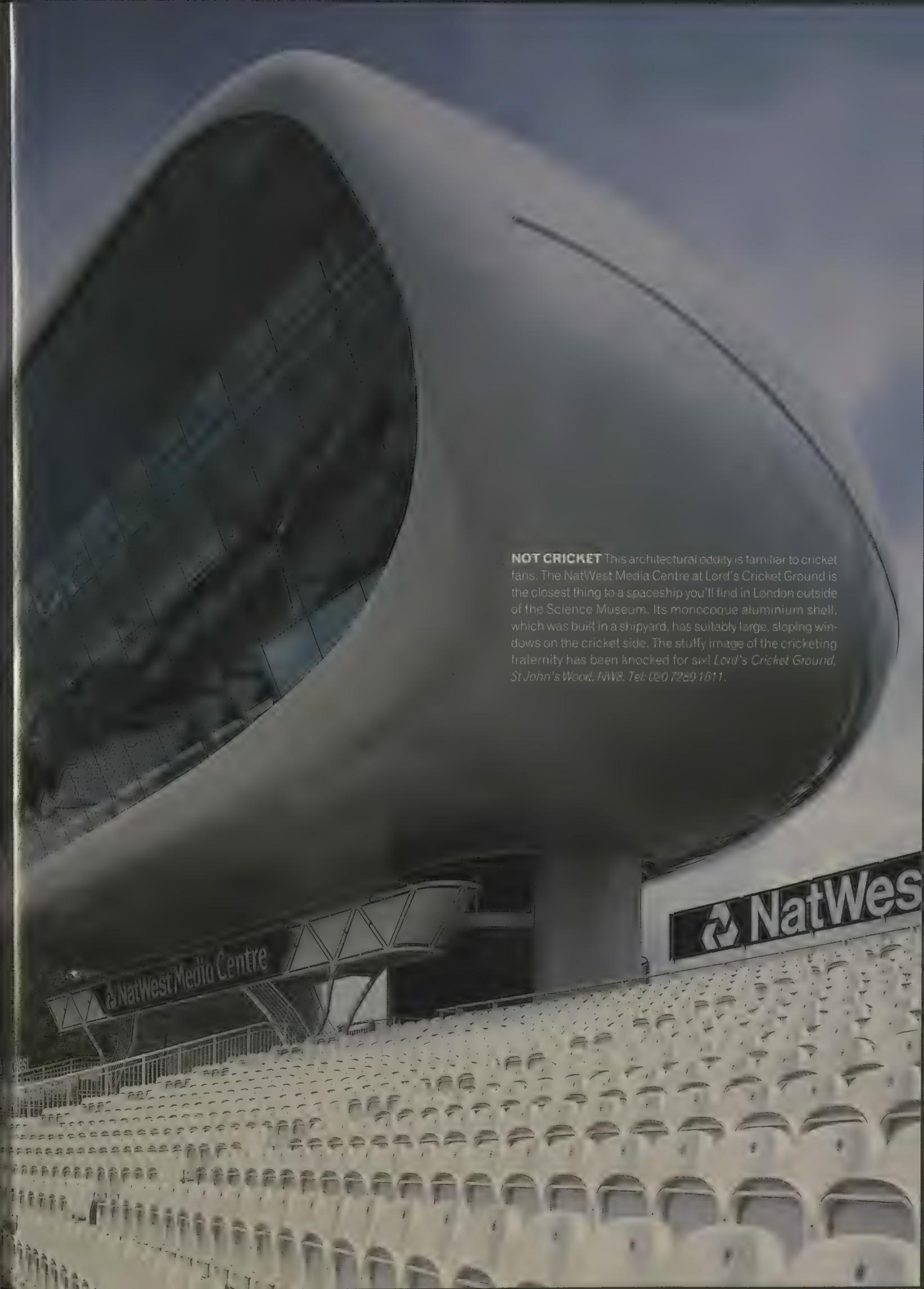
TOWER OF STRENGTH If you're going to have tower blocks then this is how to do it. There's no pussyfooting around here, no apologising for being a massive concrete structure. Trellick Tower, located near trendy Portobello Road, is a potent reminder of the new brutalism of the 1960s. It is one of the most widely visible of all the city's landmarks and seems to follow you around West London. Architect Erno Goldfinger built lots of similar blocks, many of which have been demolished, but this tower remains a powerful piece of urban sculpture. *Trellick Tower, 5 Golborne Rd, W10.*

PURE FOLLY On the junction of Gray's Inn Road and Pentonville Road, atop an otherwise very plain four-storey buildings, stands—a lighthouse? Why is it there? No one seems to know for sure. Some claim it was once a fairground helter-skelter tower. Other suggestions include a former clock tower or a camera obscura. But inspections of the interior, says Camden Council, show that it can't have been either. It seems that it was a totally useless architectural flourish, a genuine eccentric folly. *297 Pentonville Road/380 Gray's Inn Rd, WC1.*

BOWMAN OF THE EAST One of the oddest things on the underground system, this clean-looking, lead-covered archer, combined with the elegant lines of East Finchley's modernist station, evokes the best of 1930s style. The building, with its ship-like, curved-glass walls, was designed by Charles Holden and opened just before the outbreak of World War II. The 10ft archer, by Eric Aumonier, is aiming his bow at the mouth of the Northern Line tunnel, which goes to all the way to Morden and was, until the building of the Channel Tunnel, Europe's longest. *East Finchley underground station, N2.*

Previous pages,
Allan Sly's
window-cleaner
sculpture and
Pierre Vivant's
traffic light tree.
Left, from top to
bottom, the East
Finchley archer;
The Ark
in Talgarth Road;
an Ottoman
hammam in
Bishopsgate, built
in 1894 by Harold
Elphick, which
currently houses
Ciro's Pizza
Pomodoro
restaurant; the
exquisitely tiled
interior of
Leighton House
in Holland Park.
Right, designed
by Future
Systems
architects, the
Media Centre at
Lord's used
aluminium
ship-building
technology in its
construction.

For more of the capital's hidden treasures, see *Eccentric London* by Benedict le Vay, published by Bradt at £12.95



NOT CRICKET This architectural oddity is familiar to cricket fans. The NatWest Media Centre at Lord's Cricket Ground is the closest thing to a spaceship you'll find in London outside of the Science Museum. Its monocoque aluminium shell, which was built in a shipyard, has suitably large, sloping windows on the cricket side. The stuffy image of the cricketing fraternity has been knocked for six! *Lord's Cricket Ground, St John's Wood, NW8. Tel: 020 7289 1611.*



ONE AUTUMN afternoon in 1987, the actor and art-lover Charlton Heston suddenly found himself on the fifth floor of an obscure building in Bloomsbury standing in front of one of the most famous paintings of the Impressionist era, Manet's *Le Bar aux Folies-Bergère*. "I didn't know this was here," he remarked to his companion. "In fact, I didn't know here was here." The "here" he was referring to was the Courtauld Institute Gallery in its former home in a Georgian terrace in Woburn Square, before it was renamed at the fine-art teaching institution at Somerset House. Heston was making the kind of discovery you never forget. The serendipitous encounter with greatness that almost reaches out from uncharacteristic surroundings to grab you by the shoulders and command your attention. And now, 15 years later, you can still discover great works of art, from old masters to cutting-edge contemporary, by following *The Illustrated London News'* eclectic guide to some of London's best-kept secrets. Please note—sometimes you need to check out opening times or make an appointment to be sure of finding them.

HIDDEN TREASURES

London's arts scene is dominated by the big galleries, but, as Simon Taft reveals, dig beneath the surface and there's an array of astonishing works just waiting to be discovered.

A Pantheon in Portraiture ▶

The Royal Society was founded by Charles II in 1660 to champion excellence in science, engineering and technology. Many fellows had their portraits painted by an artist of their choice, so this collection is not only a pantheon of British science and technology—the art is also by some of the finest painters. Instantly recognisable is a Sir Joshua Reynolds painting of an irascible-looking Sir John Pringle, right—metaphysicist, philosopher, soldier and physician to George III—who died of apoplexy shortly after the picture was finished. The Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, SW1. Tel: 020 7839 5561.



Anatomical Artistry ▶

Based on the collection of anatomist John Hunter, surgeon extraordinaire to George III, The Hunterian Museum showcases objects not for the squeamish, such as the skeleton of the "Irish Giant" Charles Byrne, and also paintings and drawings owned by Hunter.

George Stubbs, the horse painter, was also fascinated by anatomy, hence *Rhinoceros*, above. The beast was painted by Stubbs when it was on show as part of a menagerie of exotic creatures, and this marvellous image was procured by Hunter as one of his oddities. Be sure to visit soon—the museum closes for two years in the new year for refurbishment. The Hunterian Museum, The Royal College of Surgeons, 35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2. Tel: 020 7869 6560.



McDonald, above, until research by curator Patricia Allderidge revealed that McDonald was an attendant at Bethlem who had worked with Dadd and other criminally insane patients. Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3. Tel: 020 8776 4307.

Mad About Art ◀

Bethlem Royal Hospital is the modern version of the old lunatic asylum, now in a south-eastern corner of Greater London. Its tiny museum has a delightful collection of paintings by Richard Dadd, the gifted artist whose promising career ended when schizophrenia drove him to patricide. He spent the rest of his life in Bethlem and Broadmoor, painting prolifically. Only the subject's name was known of the most recent acquisition, *John*

McDonald, above, until research by curator Patricia Allderidge revealed that McDonald was an attendant at Bethlem who had worked with Dadd and other criminally insane patients. Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3. Tel: 020 8776 4307.

Lost in Space

There is no single work of art on permanent show at the new initiative Bloomberg SPACE. Instead, the huge foyer of the financial services giant's European headquarters—designed by Norman Foster—has been transformed by founder Michael Bloomberg into somewhere for people to enjoy a rotating display of contemporary art. The exhibition changes every six weeks, so call to find out what's on next—or just take pot luck. Bloomberg SPACE, 50 Finsbury Square, EC2. Tel: 020 7330 7959.



The Collector of Cultures ▲

The venue for the Monsoon Art Collection—a building known as The Battleship—is almost as much a sight to see as the art itself. Monsoon is the clothing company created in the 1970s by Peter Simon to appeal to the era's youth. It's all about being cool and exploring new horizons, and so is the art. The building is a 1960s icon itself, designed by Paul Hamilton for British Rail and left derelict until Simon bought it and restored it to splendour. The collection is by contemporary artists that reflect the travelling generation. Among the pieces is Alighiero Boetti's *Map of the World*, based on the fabric work of Afghan craftspeople. Returning soon to take pride of place in front of The Battleship will be Korean artist Soo-Ja Kim's *Bottari Truck*, above. Monsoon Building, 179 Harrow Road, W2. Tel: 020 7313 3000.

ABOVE COURTESY OF SOO-JA KIM AND THE MONSOON COLLECTION

Iconic Imagery

Sir Christopher Wren's Chapel of St Peter and St Paul was gutted by fire in 1779 and was redecorated and partially rebuilt in a delicate neoclassical style by James "Athenian" Stuart and William Newton in 1779-89. *The Preservation of St Paul after Shipwreck at Malta*, the huge altarpiece, was one of the first major commissions for the self-taught American painter Benjamin West, who went on to become the only foreigner to be president of the Royal Academy. **Chapel of St Peter and St Paul, The Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, SE10.**
Tel: 020 8269 4746.



Creative Justice

The Society of Antiquaries is one of the learned societies that populate the courtyard buildings of the Royal Academy. It started life in about 1586 as the College of Antiquaries—dealing with “antiquity” with a particular interest in archaeology—and moved to its present home in 1874. Hans Eworth, a Flemish artist, worked at the English court as Holbein's successor as favourite painter from about 1549. He painted Mary Tudor in 1554, capturing the queen—"Bloody Mary"—in her wedding outfit wearing jewellery purportedly given to her by her groom, Philip II of Spain, as a wedding gift. This is one of many fascinating works on show in the building. **Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, W1.**
Tel: 020 7734 0193.

Off the Wall ▶

The original Royal Exchange, founded in 1566 by Sir Thomas Gresham, was destroyed in the Great Fire a century later and subsequently rebuilt, only to be razed once again by flames. The ambulatory of the present third Exchange contains a series of 24 mural paintings, dating from 1895 to 1924, depicting moments in the history of the nation and the City. Many of the artists commissioned, including Stanhope Forbes, are even more high-profile now than in their lifetimes. Refurbishment has turned the ambulatory into a luxury shopping destination, and visitors can view the panels from a glass walkway during normal shopping hours. **Royal Exchange, Bank, EC3.** Tel: 020 7776 7244.



Sketching the Scientist ▶

The friendly younger rival of The Royal Society, The Royal Institution was founded in 1799. Michael Faraday started the Christmas Lectures for young people here, which are now televised in a lecture theatre that was rebuilt in 1930 to roughly the same plan as the original. Faraday's lab was in the basement, and it has been recreated thanks to a drawing, *Michael Faraday in his Basement Laboratory*, right, by Harriet Moore. His sanctum sanctorum, no one was permitted to enter without his express invitation, which was rarely given. In the mid-1850s, Harriet was admitted to make a series of detailed watercolour sketches, with this particular painting showing Faraday himself. **The Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, W1.**
Tel: 020 7409 2992.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

From cocktails to port, Clare Brundle takes a look at the top tipples for seasonal supping.



CHAMPAGNE DARLINGS

Bubbly's leading labels are ensuring they don't lose their fizz by introducing unusual and exciting new ways in which to enjoy champagne. This winter sees Krug introduce a limited-edition Double Magnum Commemorative Case in celebration of Henri Krug's 40th year at the prestigious champagne house. Containing magnums of Krug 1962—Henri's first vintage—and Krug 1982, champagne aficionados should head to Selfridges or Harrods to buy one of only seven numbered cases available in the UK.

On a smaller scale, Veuve Clicquot's innovative and unique Clicco drinking device, above far left, snaps on the top of 20cl bottles for instant drinking, so you can forget the traditional flute—two years of research has ensured that the quality and taste of the champagne remains unaffected. Buy a party pack of four bottles in a Clicquot-yellow paint-pot-cum-ice-bucket for singing 'Old Lang Syne' in the streets!

Laurent-Perrier is ready to help with entertaining over Christmas with its new party pack of invitations, place cards and menu cards, above left. All feature the discreet LP motif and are sold exclusively by Papyrus—just remember to chill the LP Brut Champagne before the guests arrive. Papyrus, 48 Fulham Rd, SW3, or mail-order www.papyrus.uk.com.

WINTER WARMERS

Looking to buy a bottle of whisky but need some advice? Take a tip to Mifroy's of Soho. Stocking over 600 whiskies from Scotland, Ireland and America, the store's knowledgeable staff and "taste 'n' select" policy should help you strike gold. Duncan Ross, assistant manager, explains that, "while whisky is traditionally associated with Christmas, there's still a huge misconception of whisky being just a digestif. It can be drunk as a chaser, an aperitif, during a meal and after—it's just a case of finding the right one. My personal recommendations include Scottish Highland Park, Ardbeg, Springbank and Balvenie single malts."

Mifroy's of Soho, 3 Greek St, W1.
Tel: 020 7437 9311.

IN THE MIX

Combining super-flavours and seasonal ingredients, mixologists are up the acestive Christmas cocktails.



The Trafalgar, 2 Spring Gardens, Trafalgar Square, SW1.



The Cinnamon Club, The Old Westminster Library, 30 Great Smith St, SW1.



Glittering Purple Bar, Purple Bar at Sanderson Hotel, 59 Berners St, W1.



Merry Christmas, Townhouse, 31 Beauchamp Place, SW3.

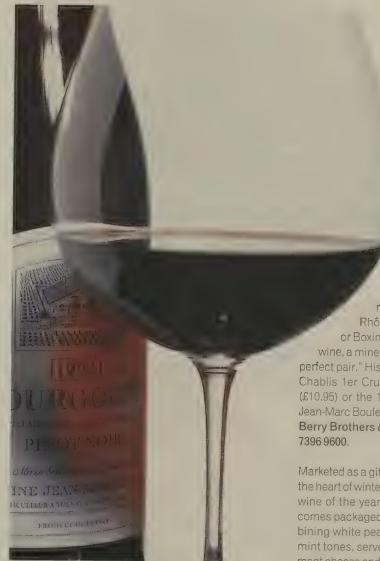


Tinsel, Gun-time, raspberry juice, and lime
Genvieve, 44-45 Lonsdale Rd, W1.



PERFECT PARTNERS

The classic Christmas combination of Stilton and port provides a tasty interlude between the main course and dessert. Matthew Owen, from the renowned Neal's Yard Dairy in Covent Garden, recommends Colston Bassett's Stilton (£14 per kilo), describing it as "sensational—a unique combination of texture and flavour, both crumbly and creamy, mellow and full-flavoured". Team with a glass of Quinta do Noval's Late Bottled Vintage Port, available from leading wine merchants, for a real taste sensation. Aged in a barrel rather than the bottle at the 300-year old estate in Portugal's Douro Valley, the ripe, vigorously fruity flavour of this wine goes perfectly with the Stilton's creamy flavour and a spicy mince pie.



WINE AND DINE

Want to find an extra-special wine to grace the Christmas table? Then head to the centuries-old fine-wine specialist Berry Brothers & Rudd, below right, where a highly trained team will help you choose from an impressive selection. Simon Berry explains that, "when matching wines with festive food, a spicy Rhône or red Burgundy are ideal with turkey or Boxing Day lunch. For those who prefer white wine, a mineral Chablis or creamy Burgundy are the perfect pair." His top recommendations include the 2000 Chablis 1er Cru from Beauregard Jean-Claude Martin (£10.95) or the 1999 Bourgogne Rouge from Domaine Jean-Marc Bouley (£9.20), left.

Berry Brothers & Rudd, 3 St James's St, SW1. Tel: 020 7396 9600.



Marketed as a gift of sunshine from the Mediterranean in the heart of winter, Muscat de Nöel, above right, is the first wine of the year that is available from December and comes packaged in a special bottle for Christmas. Combining white peach, orange flower, lemon, mango and mint tones, serve it chilled as a dessert wine to complement cheese and fruity desserts.



FESTIVE FEASTS

As diets are abandoned and thoughts turn to turkey, Clare Brundle finds out what's on offer at London's top eating spots and reveals Christmas memories from the teams behind the scenes.



italian

ISOLA

145 Knightsbridge, SW1. Tel: 020 7838 1044.

Passionate about food from an early age, Graziano Bonacina, Head Chef at Isola, below, has been key in developing the restaurant's reputation for serving up the highest-quality classic Italian fare. This year's two Christmas menus feature a smoked fish salad; risotto with radicchio *trevisano* and cheese fondue; glazed, oven-roasted lamb shank; and warm panettone pudding. (£36-£42pp.)

"In Italy, Christmas Day is always memorable as it brings all the family together for a meal of up to 10 courses. I'll be at my parents' home in Bergamo—at least 20 of us sit down to eat about midday and don't finish until after 7 o'clock. While the food is important, the best part is being at home all together." **Graziano Bonacina, Head Chef**



MAGGIORE'S

33 King St, Covent Garden, WC1. Tel: 020 7379 9696.

A trip to the Tuscan restaurant Maggiore's, above, in Covent Garden won't fail to get you in the festive mood. The restaurant completely changes its interior four times a year to suit the season, so at Yuletide you can dine beside a roaring log fire and beech branches adorned with decorations. (Pre-/post-theatre and à la carte from £12.50pp.)

NEAL STREET RESTAURANT

26 Neal St, WC2.

Tel: 020 7836 8368.

For the past 30 years, Antonio Carluccio's landmark Neal Street Restaurant has been committed to promoting regional Italian dishes. Updating menus seasonally, the most sought-after winter ingredients are wild mushrooms and truffles, including the exquisite white Alba truffle that appears in many of December's dishes. Sample the likes of *tagliolini* with black-truffle sauce and white-truffle shavings followed by poached turbot with truffle hollandaise. (£40-£60pp.)

"No single dish represents the whole of Italy at Christmas, but the structure is constant—the entire extended family is invited to one house for a feast of antipasti, broth, pasta, meats and dessert. My favourite was spent in my country house with big fires, great food and good friends." **Antonio Carluccio, Owner**



ATLANTIC BAR & GRILL

20 Glasshouse St, W1. Tel: 020 7734 4888.

Check out the recently revamped Atlantic, below, which has not only updated its interior design but also its menu. Head Chef David Roache, who took over the kitchen in April, explains: "We have moved away from complicated modern English to a new style of comfort food that everyone understands, combining other European culinary influences." The result is a "new look" Christmas menu that includes roasted breast of pheasant, braised beef skirt, pan-fried salmon and chargrilled tuna loin among the main-course treats. (Dinner £45pp.) "I don't have many personal Christmas memories as I'm normally working. By the time I get home it's too late for a family meal and I'm sick to death of the sight of turkey!" **David Roache, Head Chef**



THE SAVOY

Strand, WC2. Tel: 020 7836 4343.

For a grand gourmet affair, book a table at The Savoy's River Restaurant, which has been serving quality cuisine since 1889. Starting with champagne and canapés in the Thames Foyer, enjoy a traditional roast Norfolk turkey with chestnut stuffing, chipolatas and vegetables followed by flamed Christmas pudding, mince pies, yule log and Christmas cake. (£220pp, including selected fine wines and digestifs.)

"After preparing Christmas lunch for The Savoy's guests, I go home to cook dinner for my wife, three daughters and family friends. The matriarch of the group is 90 years old and makes the best Christmas pudding I have tasted." **Anton Edelmann, Master Chef**

1837

30 Albemarle St, Mayfair, W1. Tel: 020 7493 6020.

At the award-winning 1837 in Raffles Brown's Hotel, Executive Chef Andrew Turner prepares a five-course treat with coffee and mince pies (£150pp). Highlights include creamed leek and potato soup, smoked haddock salmon, Celtic scallops, roasted bronze turkey or Angus beef fillet, and Christmas pudding. Expect classic dishes with a contemporary twist. "My most memorable Christmas Day meal was undoubtedly at my mum's 13 years ago. Halfway through the meal, my wife's waters broke, and by 5pm I was the proud father of a little baby girl." **Andrew Turner, Executive Chef**



french

THE ADMIRALTY

Somerset House, Strand, WC2.

Tel: 020 7845 4646.

Combining a riverside setting with modern French fare and top-quality ingredients, it's no wonder The Admiralty, above, has won a firm fan base. Go à la carte at Christmas and enjoy four or five courses (£38/£47pp), including salmon tian, grilled monkfish, roast venison and dark-chocolate *moelleux* with Armagnac ice cream. Nominated for *Time Out's* Best Vegetarian Restaurant 2002, the Garden menu features braised puy lentils, and ricotta cheese and pine-nut cannelloni.

"My worst Christmas meal was when I stayed in Les Gets and left the shopping too late. Although I ate wonderful foie gras and patisseries, the only other thing available was pizza! This year I'll be heading to my parents in France—I can trust them to provide a delicious meal of wild smoked salmon, stuffed snails and slow-roasted goose with parsnips and glazed chestnuts." **Morgan Meunier, Head Chef**

FIREHOUSE

3 Cromwell Rd, SW7.

Tel: 020 7584 7258.

For a more intimate affair, head to South Kensington's Firehouse to taste the crème de la crème of French cuisine at a fraction of the usual London prices. Head Chef Daniel Crowe focuses on classical cuisine with modern and seasonal influences. December will see the likes of roast venison with all the trimmings join the à la carte menu at under £20 per person. The exclusive New Year's menu will feature such delicacies as wild mushrooms, truffles, caviar and lobster for under £60.

"The worst Christmas meal I've eaten was when my family were away and I was working—I came home to a cheese sandwich. My favourite is my mum's roast—I'd choose her overcooked turkey and veg over anyone else's." **Daniel Crowe, Head Chef**

asian

NAHM

5 Halkin St, SW1. Tel: 020 7333 1234.

Dining at The Halkin's respected Michelin-starred Thai restaurant Nahm, below, is a treat whatever the time of year. However, in the run-up to Christmas, celebrated Head Chef David Thompson has prepared a choice of four different set menus. Try a simple two-course *pad thai* noodles and white sticky rice with mango combination (£18pp) or the more extensive feast of green curry with fish dumplings, *kanom jin* noodles, spiced, salted beef and steamed eggs. (£25pp.)

"My favourite Christmas food is brandy butter—with preferably more brandy than butter! I can eat it with almost anything, or on its own—I love the stuff!"

David Thompson, Head Chef



THE CINNAMON CLUB

The Old Westminster Library, 30 Great Smith St, SW1.

Tel: 020 7222 2555.

Sick to death of traditional choices? Then consider a multi-cultural option. Winner of *Time Out's* Best Indian 2002, The Cinnamon Club, above, serves up a fusion of Indian, Far Eastern and French cuisine using spices flown over from India. This year diners can enjoy a smoked salmon with spiced cottage-cheese starter followed by spice-roasted goose with masala sautéed potatoes and coconut pancakes with coconut ice cream. (£40pp.)

"My sister is married to an Englishman, so all the family congregates at their house and he cooks up a feast. He surpassed himself last year, serving up an ancient dish of goose stuffed with a chicken stuffed with a partridge stuffed with a quail." **Iqbal Wahhab, Owner**

OPHIM

139 Wardour St, W1. Tel: 020 7434 9899.

Celebrating the end of a successful first year, Ophim, right, has made a name for itself with its popular range of North Indian cuisine. Head Chef Shailesh Bisht describes how "each and every dish has a distinctive taste, flavoured by a wide range of spices, from mace to turmeric to black cumin seeds. However, they all share one feature: freshness." Diners are in for a treat with Bisht at the helm—he has cooked for many state events during his several years service to India's prime minister. Offering two Christmas set menus (£19.50 & £24.50pp), mains include chicken stuffed with eggs, dried fruits and spicy mince, and flambéed trout.

"Three things I love about Christmas are brussels sprouts, roast potatoes and gravy as it's the only time of year I eat them. My most memorable Christmas meal was when I started boarding school and had my first taste of turkey with all the trimmings followed by mince pies—I was in heaven!" **Sadiq Warsi, Owner**



[toptickets]

festive fun from stage to screen, galleries to concert halls

contents

THEATRE 65

BOOK REVIEWS 66

DANCE 67

FILM 68

MUSIC 69

OPERA 70

EXHIBITIONS 71

OTHER EVENTS 72

theatre

More screen stars tread the boards with Sean Bean as *Macbeth*, Ralph Fiennes as Jung in *The Talking Cure* & Gillian Anderson in *What the Night is For*. It's *Anything Goes* at the National, while the RSC brings *Midnight's Children* from page to stage.

ANYTHING GOES Last year, Trevor Nunn gave us *South Pacific* as the National's Christmas treat. This year it's Cole Porter's 1934 ocean-liner musical about a tough showgirl who's surrounded by a ship of fools. Despite six credited writers (PG Wodehouse among them) & rewrites for a 1987 New York revival, the storyline doesn't hold water. But not to worry, as the numbers include "I Get a Kick Out of You", "You're the Top" & "All Through the Night". Opens Dec 18. *Olivier, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1* (020 7452 3000).

CONTACT Susan Stroman & John Weidman's Tony Award-winning dance-musical is performed as three separate, one-act "dance plays". Physical & emotional connections are made by characters in an electrifying pool hall, a stultifying Italian restaurant & an idyllic French garden. Leigh Zimmerman (from the musical *Chicago*), ballet star Sarah Wilder & Michael Praed lead the



Rock meets the circus in *Saltimbanco*, Cirque du Soleil's breathtaking celebration of street theatre, above.

cast. Queen's, Shaftesbury Ave, WC1 (020 7494 5040).

HOME & BEAUTY Somerset Maugham may no longer dominate the West End like he did, but following a successful run of *The Constant Wife* now comes Christopher Luscombe's revival of this 1923 comedy. Revolving around the marital complications of a returning World War I hero, the play features that fine young actress Victoria Hamilton with Jamie Theakston & Jane Hor. *Lyric, Shaftesbury Ave, W1* (0870 890 1107).

MACBETH Sean Bean takes a break from his film & TV career to play the troubled Thane in Edward Hall's production. Samantha Bond joins him with blood on her hands as Lady Macbeth. Until Feb 1. *Albery, St Martin's Lane, WC2* (020 7369 1730).

MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN Having staged Salman Rushdie's *Haroun & the Sea of Stories* in 1998, Tim Supple now directs this long-planned RSC adaptation of Rushdie's Booker Prize-winning novel. A cast of 20 play out a sprawling saga about a Muslim family set against the turbulent history of a newly independent India. Opens Jan 18. *Barbican Theatre, Silk St, EC2* (020 7638 8891).

MRS WARREN'S PROFESSION Peter Hall directs Brenda Blethyn as the unrepentant brothel owner who reveals to her Cambridge-educated daughter (Rebecca Hall) the source of their wealth. George Bernard Shaw's 1894 play is still one of his most brisk & timely dramas. *Strand Theatre, Aldwych, WC2* (020 7930 8800).

BEST NEW BOOKS ON THE CAPITAL

NEW LONDON ARCHITECTURE
KENNETH POWELL

Merrell, £29.95

Although it looks stunning—at least every other page carries a glossy colour photograph that is a piece of art in itself—*New London Architecture* is more than decorative coffee-table fodder. In a comprehensive and lucid introduction, Powell emphasises just how political the London architecture scene has become. He takes the reader from the corporate boom of the 1980s, through the depressing era of project-shelving during the recession, to the millennial concern with making environmental and community architecture economically viable. The examples with which he illustrates his introduction are dealt with in the double-page spreads that make up the rest of the volume, detailing the architectural and financial history of each project and including exciting ideas that have become stuck at planning stage, such as Daniel Libeskind's "Spiral" for the Victoria and Albert Museum.



LONDON IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

JERRY WHITE

Penguin, £14.99

Jerry White clearly loves London, and his enthusiasm is infectious. While the first chapter tackles the physical city, its buildings and growth, his real interest lies with the people. His Londoner is not determined by a narrow, born-and-bred definition—he arrived in the capital from Dorset at the age of 21—but includes anyone whose life has been affected in some way by the city. Mixing individual histories and general overviews, White chronicles both the resilience and flexibility of Londoners in the century that saw the city struggle through two world wars and the tensions that accompanied London's transformation into one of the most ethnically diverse places on the planet. The reader is left with the belief that, despite its problems, London may well be the city *Newsweek* described in 1996 as "the coolest in the world".



LONDON'S THEATRES

MIKE KILBURN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALBERTO ARZOZ

New Holland, £14.99

By allowing the history of London theatre-building to become a history of London theatre, which in turn begins to extend into a history of London (and this all in only six pages), Mike Kilburn's introduction to *London's Theatres* is inevitably unsatisfactory. In the main section of the book, however, the expert photography of Alberto Arzoz more than compensates for the author's occasionally pompous style, and the stories behind each building are undeniably fascinating. The book is also very user-friendly—the theatre pages are arranged in alphabetical order, with important dates in the life of each listed in the margin. A must for drama buffs, and an interesting tome to dip into for the casual theatre-goer. R N-H



GEORGE PERIN/PA

SALTIMBANCO Last seen in London in 1996, this Cirque du Soleil show (the title is Italian for street performer) offers contortionists, trapeze artists & a breathtaking bungee-jumping ballet of a finale that makes up for the annoying, accompanying rock band & the self-consciously punky carnival atmosphere. Opens Jan 7.

Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, SW1 (020 7589 8212).

THE TALKING CURE Ralph Fiennes returns to the stage as the psychoanalyst Carl Jung in Christopher Hampton's new play, which explores the relationship between the Swiss psychiatrist, his mentor Sigmund Freud (James Hazeldine) & a young Russian patient (Jodhi May). The ever-busy Howard Davies directs. Opens Dec 12. *Lyttelton, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (020 7452 3000).*

THE VORTEX This play, in which a young man discovers that his glamorous mother has taken a lover half her age, caused a sensation when it opened in London in 1924 & created a star out of its playwright & leading actor, Noël Coward. The Donmar's new artistic director, Michael Grandage, now revives it with a cast starring Francesca Annis. Opens Dec 10. *Donmar Warehouse, Earham St, WC2 (020 7369 1732).*

WHAT THE NIGHT IS FOR *The X-Files'* Gillian Anderson makes her West End debut opposite Roger Allam in a new drama by American playwright Michael Weller. John Caird directs this night of revelations as a woman is reunited with her ex-lover for dinner in her hotel room. *Comedy, Panton St, SW1 (020 7369 1731).*



dance

The tutu & tinsel season brings refreshed *Nutcrackers* from Christopher Hampson & Matthew Bourne, but it's left to that grande dame of the avant garde, Pina Bausch, to really shake things up.

ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLET This is a new *Nutcracker* courtesy of Christopher Hampson & it's sure to have a distinctive look with designs by the caricaturist Gerald Scarfe. Opening night will feature Irek Mukhamedov as Drosselmeyer, Thomas Edur as the Prince & Agnes Oaks as the Sugar Plum Fairy. Dec 2-Jan 4. London Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (020 7632 8300).
ROYAL BALLET Anthony Dowell's always popular 1987 production of *Swan Lake* returns (in repertory from Nov 18-Dec 17), followed by Peter Wright's revised staging of *The Nutcracker* for the Christmas season (Dec 20-

Christmas shows

PETER PAN Performed for only the second time in the theatre's 103-year history, the special-effects laden show stars Robert Powell as Captain Hook and Bonny Langford as the boy who never grew up.

12 Dec-19 Jan. Richmond Theatre, The Green, Richmond (020 8940 0088).

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Tim Piggott-Smith stars as Scrooge, the meanest man in London, whose life is transformed in Neil Bartlett's adaptation of the Dickens tale. Nov 29-Jan 4. Lyric Hammersmith, King St, W6 (020 8741 2311).

SLEEPING BEAUTY Based on Perrault's 17th-century classic, a world of beastly shadows, nasty smells, a forest full of enchanted trouble and a less-than-brave prince are brought to life in this version of the fairy tale. Nov 22-Jan 25. Young Vic, The Cut, SE1 (020 7863 8000).

STORM Following an eventful day in the life of a group of disparate city characters, *Storm* sees what happens when an engulfing weather front approaches, featuring vivid imagery, live music, technical wizardry and amazing aerial acrobatics. Dec 18-Jan 4. Barbican Theatre, Silk St, EC2 (020 7638 8891).

THE SNOWMAN Bill Alexander's popular stage version of Raymond Briggs' magical story is back for its fifth year running. Dec 11-Jan 12. Peacock Theatre, Portugal St, WC2 (020 7863 8000).

CINDERELLA Interpreted by Charles Way, the rags-to-riches fairy tale is set against the backdrop of 18th-century Germany and features the music of Mozart. Nov 14-Jan 25. Polka Theatre, The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 (020 8543 4888).

Festive

favourites: Tim Piggott-Smith plays Scrooge in the Lyric Hammersmith's *A Christmas Carol*, above; Gerald Scarfe's influence is clear in ENB's new *Nutcracker*, right. Opposite, Alexander Armstrong, Victoria Hamilton and Jamie Theakston in *Home & Beauty*.

Jan 10). The New Year sees a triple bill of Frederick Ashton's *Scènes de Ballet* set to Stravinsky; Kenneth MacMillan's *Winter Dreams* (inspired by Chekhov's *Three Sisters* & Tchaikovsky); & the Czech choreographer Jiri Kylian's Janacek-scored *Sinfonietta* (Jan; dates to be confirmed). Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (020 7304 4000).

THE NUTCRACKER Matthew Bourne gives his own spin on this Tchaikovsky Christmas stalwart, drawing on everything from *Oliver Twist* & the Icecapades to Busby Berkeley musicals. Nov 20-Jan 25. Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC1 (020 7863 8000).

TANZTHEATER WUPPERTAL

Pina Bausch's 1978 *Kontakthof*

caused a sensation when it was first seen here in 1982. Bausch

has spent more than a year rehearsing a new company of men & women over the age of 65 for this meditation on experience versus innocence. Nov 28-30.

Barbican Theatre, Silk St, EC1 (020 7638 8891).



film

You can almost treat the season's forthcoming releases like old friends with the return of James Bond, Harry Potter, the *Star Trek* crew & *The Lord of the Rings*.

BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE After *Roger & Me*, his documentary about General Motors & its devastating impact on a small American town, that professional irritant Michael Moore now tries to explain his fellow countrymen's love affair with firearms as he crosses America interviewing academics, bar-room philosophers, gun victims & militia groups. By turns funny, moving & shocking. Opens Nov 15.

DIE ANOTHER DAY Lee Tamahori, the director of the latest 007 screen adventure, insists that his Bond will be "unrecognisable". Well, having an Oscar winner (*Monster's Ball*'s Halle Berry) as a Bond girl is a first. But rest assured that the familiar ingredients still include Pierce Brosnan in a tux, a supervillain (Toby Stephens), exotic henchmen & a plan for world domination. Oh, & Madonna provides the title song (& a cameo appearance). Opens Nov 20.

8 WOMEN Imagine an Agatha Christie yarn made by the *Moulin Rouge* team & you get some idea of François Ozon's quirky French murder mystery-cum-comedy-cum-musical, in which a lone man lies dead in a snowbound mansion full of women. Shot in the gaudy hues of 1950s Technicolor, the film has a mouthwatering cast that ranges from post-New Wave stars (Catherine Deneuve; Isabelle Huppert) to contemporary stalwarts (Emmanuelle Béart) & the freshest-faced ingénues (Virginie Ledoyen). Each gets to sing a number (from torch song to insipid pop) in this entertaining curate's egg of a movie. Opens Nov 29.

THE FOUR FEATHERS Having brought a thriller-like intensity to the politicking of Cate Blanchett's virgin Queen in *Elizabeth*, director Shekhar Kapur now turns his attention to A E W Mason's oft-filmed tale of cowardice & redemption among the late 18th-century British troops of the Sahara. Despite stories of on-set



accidents & uncooperative Moroccan weather hindering the shoot, Kapur & his hip young cast—Heath Ledger, Wes Bentley, Kate Hudson—may yet pull off a spirited, old-school adventure. Opens Nov 15.

HARRY POTTER & THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS "There's a little more humour & it's a little darker as well," promises director Chris Columbus about the latest must-see film for Quidditch fans everywhere. The humour is provided by a bewigged Kenneth Branagh (as Gilderoy Lockhart) & the darkness from a sinister Jason Isaacs (as Lucius Malfoy). Opens Nov 15.

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

The global box-office takings for the first part of this Tolkien trilogy look set to reach the \$1 billion mark, so it seems to have pleased more than simply Hobbit lovers. Considering that this second instalment features the same principal cast & crew, there's no reason to think that it (& the New Zealand landscapes

The enchanted Great Hall is brought to life in the Harry Potter sequel, above. Below, Heath Ledger in 18th-century Saharan adventure *The Four Feathers*.

masquerading as Middle Earth) will be any less impressive. Opens Dec 18.

STAR TREK: NEMESIS The 10th big-screen outing (the even-numbered films always bode well in *Star Trek* lore) for the *Enterprise* crew, led by Patrick Stewart's Jean-Luc Picard, finds tension in the galaxy as a human takes control of the Romulan Empire. Look out for Whoopi Goldberg & Ashley Judd (reprising a role she played in the *Next Generation* TV series before becoming a film star). Opens Jan 3.





MUSIC

Before the concert halls are decked with musical holly, the Royal Festival Hall has jazz & klezmer, John Adams & Philip Glass strike a contemporary note at the Barbican, & Dolly Parton proves why she's queen of country at Hammersmith Apollo.

ALBERT HALL

Kensington Gore, SW7 (020 7589 8212).

Jools Holland From boogie woogie to big band. Nov 28 & 30.

Christmas Concerts Festive sounds come from the Bach Choir (Dec 14), the London Community Gospel Choir (Dec 17), Tim Brooke-Taylor introducing the BT Christmas Concert (Dec 18), King's College Choir (Dec 19) & a carol singalong for children led by Jonathan Cohen (Dec 21). The RPO performs Handel's *Messiah* with various choral support (Dec 14 & 20), & the Mozart Festival Orchestra offers carols by candlelight (Dec 22).

BARBICAN HALL

Silk Street, EC1 (020 7638 8891).

John Adams One of America's leading composers conducts his own work with pianist Joanna MacGregor & the London Symphony Orchestra. Nov 20.

Further Beyond Nashville

Back after last year's success, this London showcase for American alternative country includes the singer-songwriter Alejandro Escovedo, the reformed Flatliners & long-time Emmylou Harris collaborator Rodney Crowell presenting a tribute to Waylon Jennings. Nov 23-Dec 11.

Samson & Delilah Colin Davis leads Saint-Saëns' best-known opera, with Olga Borodina & José Cura in the title roles, & the LSO & Chorus. Dec 15, 17 & 19.

Christmas & New Year Concerts

Seasonal selections include baritone Thomas Allen with the LSO (Dec 21 & 22), Mozart by candlelight with the Mozart Festival Orchestra (Dec 27) & opera favourites with the London Concert Orchestra & soloists Mary Hegerty, Christine Rice, John Daszak & Roderick Earle (Dec 29). The LCO performs a New Year's Eve Prom (Rossini, Vivaldi, Grieg etc.) & the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra a Viennese gala of Strauss waltzes (Dec 31 & Jan 1).

Glenn Miller Orchestra

Distinctive big-band swing. Dec 30.

Philip on Film Live A season of scores by Philip Glass to accompany such films as *Koyannisqatsi*, *Dracula* (1931) &

Season's greetings:
the London Community Gospel Choir makes a welcome return to the Albert Hall.

Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête*.
Jan 7-10.

HAMMERSMITH APOLLO

Queen Caroline St, W6
(0870 400 0870).

Dolly Parton Rescheduled dates for the queen of country. Nov 18-19.

John Mayall & Pete Green Brit blues legends. Dec 4.

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
South Bank Centre, SE1
(020 7960 4242).

London Jazz Festival Running until Nov 24, this year's line-up ranges from Julian Joseph (Nov 16), the Brad Mehldau Trio (Nov 18) & cult Australian trio The Necks (Nov 20) to Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés (Nov 17) & veteran saxophonist Lee Konitz (Nov 24).

Wolfgang Sawallisch The conductor & pianist continues to explore Beethoven's major works with the Philharmonia Orchestra, including Murray Perahia in three of the Piano Concertos. Nov 28-Dec 8.

London Philharmonic Orchestra

An impressive Mahler season under Kurt Masur, Mark Elder, Jiri Belohlavek, Takuo Yuasa & Bernard Haitink. Nov 30-Dec 15.

Klezmer to Cabaret A day devoted to Jewish-infused music, from early work performed by Lucie Skeaping & The Burning Bush to an intriguing collaboration between the London Mozart Players & the Swiss group The World Quintet. Dec 1.

Christmas Concerts *Messiah* by candlelight with the Mozart Festival Orchestra (Dec 8), seasonal classics from the BBC Concert Orchestra (Dec 10 & 15) & the London Concert Orchestra (Dec 24). The Johann Strauss Orchestra & dancers also get in a Viennese whirl (Dec 29).

WIGMORE HALL

36 Wigmore St, W1 (020 7935 2141)

Director's Festival Departing director William Lyne presents a six-month farewell celebration (from Nov 28) that opens with this gala, featuring the pianist Mitsuko Uchida, tenor Ian Bostridge & mezzo-soprano Angelika Kirchschlager. The Wigmore's annual "Christmas cracker", devised by pianist Julius Drake, includes seasonal works by Bach, Britten, Wolf, Villa-Lobos, Noël Coward & TS Eliot, & such artists as Amanda Roocroft, Gerald Finley & Fiona Shaw. Dec 18.

opera

David McVicar's new *Tosca*, Trevor Nunn directing Nicholas Maw's *Sophie's Choice* & *La Bohème* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall ensure that not all the operatic offerings in the capital are restagings.

BITE 2002
Barbican Theatre, Silk St, EC2
(020 7638 8891).

Hashirigaki A series of striking tableaux accompanies Heiner Goebbels' settings of text from Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*, in which Japanese folk music, bluegrass & church bells all play a part.
Nov 20-23.

ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA
London Coliseum,
St Martin's Lane, WC2
(020 7632 8300).

The Barber of Seville A revival of Jonathan Miller's 1987 production showcases the company's young artists, with Leslie John Flanagan as Figaro, Fredrik Strid as Almaviva & Victoria Simmonds as Rosina. In repertory until Nov 28.

Xerxes Nicholas Hytner's 1985

Going for a song: Royal Opera favourites *La Traviata*, above, and *La Cenerentola*, below.

Handel staging returns with Sarah Connolly in the title role & Mark Richardson as Ariodates. In repertory until Nov 30.

Tosca David McVicar directs a new production of Puccini's classic in a translation by Amanda Holden. Cheryl Barker sings the title role opposite her husband Peter Coleman-Wright as Scarpia. In repertory from Nov 21-29.

Khovanshchina Francesca Zambello's Olivier Award-winning production of Mussorgsky's historical epic returns with Willard White as the conspiring Prince & John Tomlinson as Dosifey. In repertory from Jan 23.

LONDON CITY OPERA
Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, SE1 (020 7960 4242).

La Bohème A new, fully staged version of Puccini's classic love story, sung in Italian. With the London City Opera Orchestra.
Dec 26-Jan 1.

ROYAL OPERA

Covent Garden, WC2 (020 7304 4000).

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg Another outing for Graham Vick's 1993 production. Amanda Roocroft sings Eva. In repertory until Dec 2.

Sophie's Choice Trevor Nunn directs the world premiere of Nicholas Maw's opera based on the 1979 novel by William Styron. Angelika Kirchschlager sings the troubled heroine. Simon Rattle conducts. In repertory Dec 7-21.

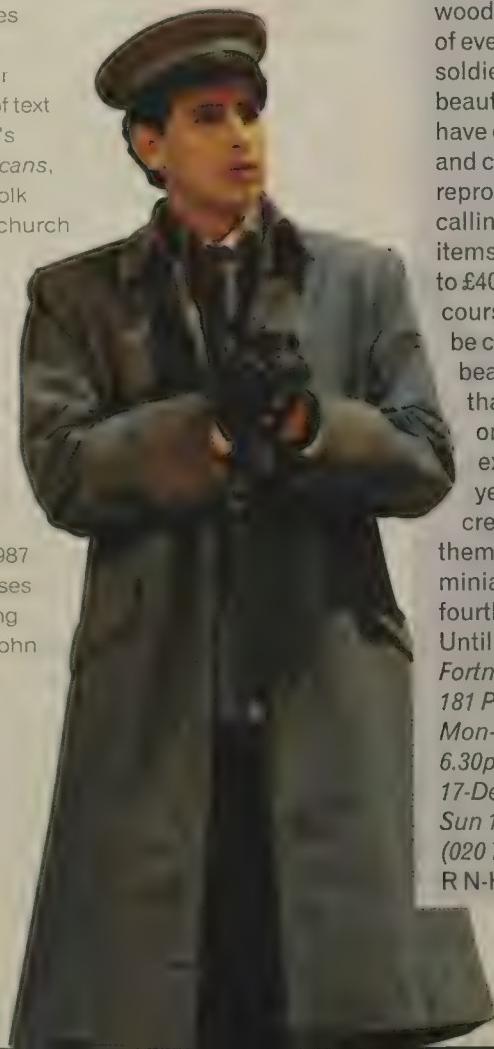
La Traviata Richard Eyre's staging returns with Inva Mula making her house debut as Violetta (sharing the role with Ruth Ann Swenson) & Roberto Aronica as Alfredo. In repertory from Dec 14-Jan 20.

La Cenerentola The Bulgarian mezzo-soprano Vesselina Kasarova gets to go to the ball in Rossini's take on Cinderella in Patrice Caurier & Moshe Laurier's production, with Simone Alaimo as Don Magnifico. In repertory from Jan 8-29.

GOING TO TOWN ON TOYS

A treat for collectors, enthusiasts and children of all ages, the Once Upon a Time... exhibition at Fortnum & Mason chronicles the development of all kinds of toys and games, from 16th-century wooden figures to special-edition Barbies. The childhood passions of every taste and budget will be on display—whole armies of tin soldiers vie for attention next to life-size rocking horses and beautifully crafted dolls' houses. The mechanically minded will have difficulty tearing themselves away from the whirring wheels and cogs of ancient tin toys, 1960s robots and the working reproduction of the first-ever clockwork train. The show is a handy calling point for last-minute Christmas shopping, too, as all the items are for sale. Prices range from the stocking-filler friendly £5 to £40,000 for the real rarities. Of course, no event of this sort would be complete without the teddy bear. Difficult as it is to believe that this nursery staple has only existed since 1902, the exhibition celebrates 100 years of the cuddly creatures. You can catch them and all the other miniature delights at the fourth-floor Gallery.
Until Dec 24.

Fortnum & Mason,
181 Piccadilly, W1.
Mon-Sat 10am-
6.30pm. From Nov
17-Dec 24, also open
Sun 11am-5pm
(020 7734 8040).
R N-H





exhibitions

Winter treats include the Royal Academy's colourful Aztecs & the British Museum's homage to Albrecht Dürer. Fashion-lovers will find Versace at the V&A & Vogue-commissioned photos at the Design Museum, while there is still time to catch the Tate's Gainsborough show on Millbank.

Readers are advised to check dates & times before making a special journey.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Great Russell St, WC1 (020 7323 8000).

Albrecht Dürer & his Legacy

Prints, drawings & rare watercolours by Dürer, with an analysis of the German renaissance artist's extraordinary achievements & his influence on later artists. Dec 6-Mar 23. Daily 10am-5.30pm (Thurs & Fri until 8.30pm). Closed Dec 24-26.

DESIGN MUSEUM

Shad Thames, SE1 (020 7940 8790).

Unseen Vogue: The Secret History of Fashion Photography

Images commissioned by *Vogue* magazine but, for various reasons, never published. They include Cecil

A la mode:
Nick Knight's photographs of Kate Moss, above, commissioned for *British Vogue*, Feb 1996 issue, are revealed in *Unseen Vogue*. Above right, Albrecht Dürer's artistic legacy is celebrated at the British Museum.

Beaton portraits of Marlene Dietrich, David Bailey's shoot with Marie Helvin & Nick Knight's collaboration with Kate Moss. Nov 1-Feb 23. Daily 10am-5.45pm (Fri until 9pm; Dec 24 & 31 until 3pm). Closed Dec 25.

GILBERT COLLECTION

Somerset House, Strand, WC2 (020 7420 9400).

Jewels of JAR, Paris A celebration of 25 years of spectacular creations by Joel Arthur Rosenthal, artist in gems, featuring more than 400 precious pieces in rubies, sapphires & other stones. Nov 2-Jan 26. Daily 10am-6pm (Dec 31 until 4pm; Jan 1 from noon). Closed Dec 24-26.

NATIONAL GALLERY

Trafalgar Sq, WC2 (020 7747 2885).

Madame de Pompadour: Images of a Mistress Paintings, sculpture, porcelain, gems, prints & furniture relating to the official mistress of King Louis XV, one of the most powerful women in 18th-century France. Until Jan 12. Daily 10am-6pm (Wed until 9pm). Closed Dec 24-26 & Jan 1.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

Piccadilly, W1 (020 7300 8000).

Aztecs Among the cultural riches of Mexico's Aztec past, dating from the 14th to 16th centuries, are pictorial manuscripts, turquoise mosaics &



objects exquisitely fashioned from gold. Nov 16-Apr 11. Daily 10am-6pm (Fri until 10pm). Closed Dec 24 & 25.

TATE MODERN

Bankside, SE1 (020 7887 8008).

Eva Hesse More than 100 works by a German-born artist whose abstract & sexually expressive works, often using string, resin, latex & other organic materials, place her among the most important sculptors of the late 20th century. Nov 13-Mar 9.

Daily 10.15am-6pm (Fri & Sat until 10pm). Closed Dec 24-26.

TATE BRITAIN

Millbank, SW1 (020 7887 8008).

Gainsborough Among the grand landscapes & glamorous full-length portraits of 18th-century aristocrats by Gainsborough, one of Britain's greatest painters, are works by artists who inspired him. Until Jan 19. Daily 10am-5.40pm. Closed Dec 24-26.

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Cromwell Rd, SW7 (020 7942 2000).

Versace at the V&A This major retrospective devoted to the great fashion designer includes creations worn by the Princess of Wales, Elton John, Madonna, Courtney Love & Elizabeth Hurley. Until Jan 12. Daily 10am-5.45pm (Wed until 10pm). Closed Dec 25 & 26.

Whiteley Silver Galleries

New, permanent display of European silver from 1400 to 1800. Among more than 500 outstanding silver & gold objects are a gold eggcup made in Paris in the 1760s & a tea service used by King George VI & Queen Elizabeth at the opening of the 1951 Festival of Britain. Opens Nov 27. Daily 10am-5.45pm (Wed until 10pm). Closed Dec 24-26.



other events

The magic of Christmas touches the wintry trees of Kew Gardens & Somerset House courtyard, scene of a now-traditional open-air ice rink. Great names of tennis confront one another in the Honda Challenge, while, in sunnier climes, England cricketers take on Australia for the Ashes.

CRICKET. AUSTRALIA V ENGLAND Nasser Hussain's team leads a new struggle for the Ashes. First Test, Nov 7-11, Brisbane; second Test, Nov 21-25, Adelaide; third Test, Nov 29-Dec 3, Perth; fourth Test, Dec 26-30, Melbourne; fifth Test, Jan 2-6, Sydney, Australia.

www.lbc.co.uk

THE WINTER OLYMPIA FINE ART & ANTIQUES FAIR

More than 240 distinguished international dealers offer fine English & Continental furniture, glass,

ceramics, textiles, oil paintings, prints, silver jewels, statuary, clocks & Oriental art. Nov 11-17. Mon 5-10pm; Tues 11am-9pm; Wed-Fri 11am-8pm; Sat 11am-7pm; Sun 11am-5pm. Olympia, Hammersmith Rd, W14 (0870 733 3105). £8 (advance bookings £5), children free.

NETWORK Q RALLY Richard Burns & Colin McRae carry British hopes high in this year's World Rally Championship. Nov 14-17. Starts & finishes Cardiff (01753 681736).

Horsing around:
the ice rink at
Somerset House,
above; below, the
Shetland pony
"Grand National"
at Olympia.



RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP CRAFTS FAIR

More than 40 craftspeople offer top-quality items for Christmas, including glass, lithography, toys & jewellery. Nov 23 & 24. 10am-5pm. Dartmouth House, 37 Charles St, W1 (020 7697 3355).

OPEN-AIR ICE RINK Drop in to watch the skaters or hire a pair of blades to join in the fun in the ultra-romantic setting of Somerset House courtyard. Nov 28-Jan 26. Daily 10am-10pm (Dec 24 & 31 until 4pm; Dec 26 & Jan 1 from noon). Somerset House, Strand, WC2 (booking on 020 7413 3399). Closed Dec 25.

MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT

Late-night opening for Kew Gardens, with mulled wine, hot chestnuts, shopping opportunities & many of the garden's features specially illuminated to magical effect. Carol-singing on Dec 13. 6.45-7.45pm. Nov 29 & 30; Dec 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 & 21. 4.15-8pm. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey (020 8332 5655).

HONDA CHALLENGE Among the great names of tennis who will be wielding their racquets in this UK leg of the Delta Tour of Champions will be Boris Becker, Pat Cash, Henri Leconte, Ilie Nastase & John McEnroe. Dec 4-8. Wed-Sat 1pm & 7.30pm; Sun 1.30pm. Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, SW7 (020 7589 8212). £9.50-£70.

CHRISTMAS TREE The towering Norwegian spruce decorated with white lights—an annual gift to London from the city of Oslo—brings a fairy-tale atmosphere to a corner of Trafalgar Square. Carols are sung around the tree from Dec 7 to 24, between 5-9pm. Switch-on, Dec 6, 6.30pm; tree illuminated from Dec 6-Jan 6, noon-midnight. Trafalgar Square, WC2 (020 7983 4234).

OLYMPIA SHOW JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIPS Top-class international horses & riders, with Christmas-themed equestrian events & daily entertainment, including the daredevil Flying Csikos from Hungary & a Shetland pony "Grand National". Dec 19-23. Daily 1pm & 7pm (doors open 9.30am). Olympia, Hammersmith Rd, W14 (0870 733 0733). £12-£36, concessions £7.20-£21.60.

PERTEMPS CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

The main race of this traditional Boxing Day steeplechase meeting is the King George VI Chase, in which Cheltenham Gold Cup winner Best Mate will be trying to improve on his second place last year. Dec 26. First race 12.45pm. Kempton Park, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey (01932 782292).

NEW YEAR'S DAY PARADE

Colourful procession, with bands, cheerleaders & entertainers, bringing US-style exuberance to the heart of London's West End. Jan 1. Noon-4pm. Starts Parliament Sq, SW1; finishes Berkeley Sq, W1 (0900 525 2020; calls cost 60p per min; proceeds to charity). www.londonparade.co.uk.

**LISTINGS COMPILED BY
IAN JOHNS, ANGELA BIRD
& MARIANNE GREEN**

Making spirits bright: late-night festivities at the Palm House, Kew.



RAY MAINE/MARINSTREAM

PRESERVING LONDON'S VICTORIAN HERITAGE

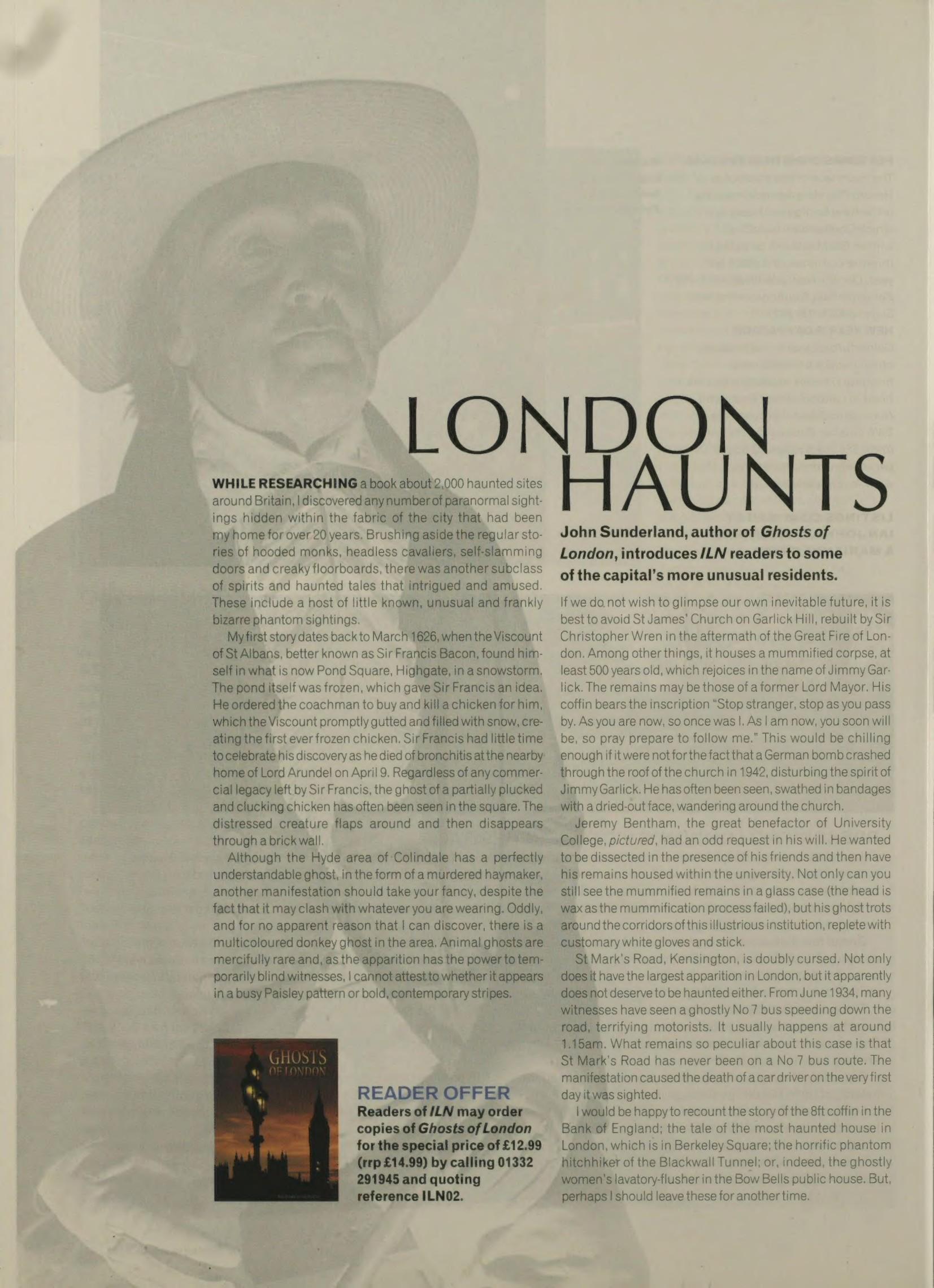
Take a stroll through Battersea Park this Christmas and you could be forgiven for thinking you had stepped back 150 years in time. Thanks to a grant of nearly £7 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the park has been lovingly restored to recapture the splendour of its Victorian heyday. The recently completed Riverside Promenade follows the original plans, which have been fortuitously discovered in a local archive, and it is easy to imagine elegant society ladies taking a turn in the surrounding ornamental gardens.

One of the challenges facing the restoration team was to combine this dignified 19th-century character with the exuberant designs of the 1951 Festival of Britain additions, which were also badly in need of attention. Many of the exhibition features were only intended to be temporary, but they now represent valuable examples of 1950s design, so alongside the Victorian refinement visitors can witness Russell Page's flamboyantly lit fountains and brightly coloured flowers trailing over the pergolas.

The work at Battersea is a huge undertaking, but Mary Austin, chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund for London Committee, is keen to emphasise that public projects of any size around the capital are eligible for support. "Very large projects such as Battersea are wonderful, but they get all the publicity," she says. "The HLF actually gives awards of as little as £500, and they are very easy to apply for."

Dispelling the myth of mounds of paperwork and soul-destroying bureaucracy, she reveals that most applications for awards of up to £50,000 go through in under three months. As an incentive for those who are intimidated by the application procedure, she has just created three new posts on her team to help people with writing their bids, so literally anyone now has a chance to benefit from the scheme.

Other recent HLF projects with a Victorian flavour have included the opening of the British Galleries at the V&A, the refurbishment of the Horniman Museum in south London and the restoration of Charles Darwin's Down House in Kent. Visit www.hlf.org.uk for details of recent projects and how to apply for grants. R N-H.



LONDON HAUNTS

WHILE RESEARCHING a book about 2,000 haunted sites around Britain, I discovered any number of paranormal sightings hidden within the fabric of the city that had been my home for over 20 years. Brushing aside the regular stories of hooded monks, headless cavaliers, self-slammimg doors and creaky floorboards, there was another subclass of spirits and haunted tales that intrigued and amused. These include a host of little known, unusual and frankly bizarre phantom sightings.

My first story dates back to March 1626, when the Viscount of St Albans, better known as Sir Francis Bacon, found himself in what is now Pond Square, Highgate, in a snowstorm. The pond itself was frozen, which gave Sir Francis an idea. He ordered the coachman to buy and kill a chicken for him, which the Viscount promptly gutted and filled with snow, creating the first ever frozen chicken. Sir Francis had little time to celebrate his discovery as he died of bronchitis at the nearby home of Lord Arundel on April 9. Regardless of any commercial legacy left by Sir Francis, the ghost of a partially plucked and clucking chicken has often been seen in the square. The distressed creature flaps around and then disappears through a brick wall.

Although the Hyde area of Colindale has a perfectly understandable ghost, in the form of a murdered haymaker, another manifestation should take your fancy, despite the fact that it may clash with whatever you are wearing. Oddly, and for no apparent reason that I can discover, there is a multicoloured donkey ghost in the area. Animal ghosts are mercifully rare and, as the apparition has the power to temporarily blind witnesses, I cannot attest to whether it appears in a busy Paisley pattern or bold, contemporary stripes.

John Sunderland, author of *Ghosts of London*, introduces *ILN* readers to some of the capital's more unusual residents.

If we do not wish to glimpse our own inevitable future, it is best to avoid St James' Church on Garlick Hill, rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren in the aftermath of the Great Fire of London. Among other things, it houses a mummified corpse, at least 500 years old, which rejoices in the name of Jimmy Garlick. The remains may be those of a former Lord Mayor. His coffin bears the inscription "Stop stranger, stop as you pass by. As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, you soon will be, so pray prepare to follow me." This would be chilling enough if it were not for the fact that a German bomb crashed through the roof of the church in 1942, disturbing the spirit of Jimmy Garlick. He has often been seen, swathed in bandages with a dried-out face, wandering around the church.

Jeremy Bentham, the great benefactor of University College, pictured, had an odd request in his will. He wanted to be dissected in the presence of his friends and then have his remains housed within the university. Not only can you still see the mummified remains in a glass case (the head is wax as the mummification process failed), but his ghost trots around the corridors of this illustrious institution, replete with customary white gloves and stick.

St Mark's Road, Kensington, is doubly cursed. Not only does it have the largest apparition in London, but it apparently does not deserve to be haunted either. From June 1934, many witnesses have seen a ghostly No 7 bus speeding down the road, terrifying motorists. It usually happens at around 1.15am. What remains so peculiar about this case is that St Mark's Road has never been on a No 7 bus route. The manifestation caused the death of a car driver on the very first day it was sighted.

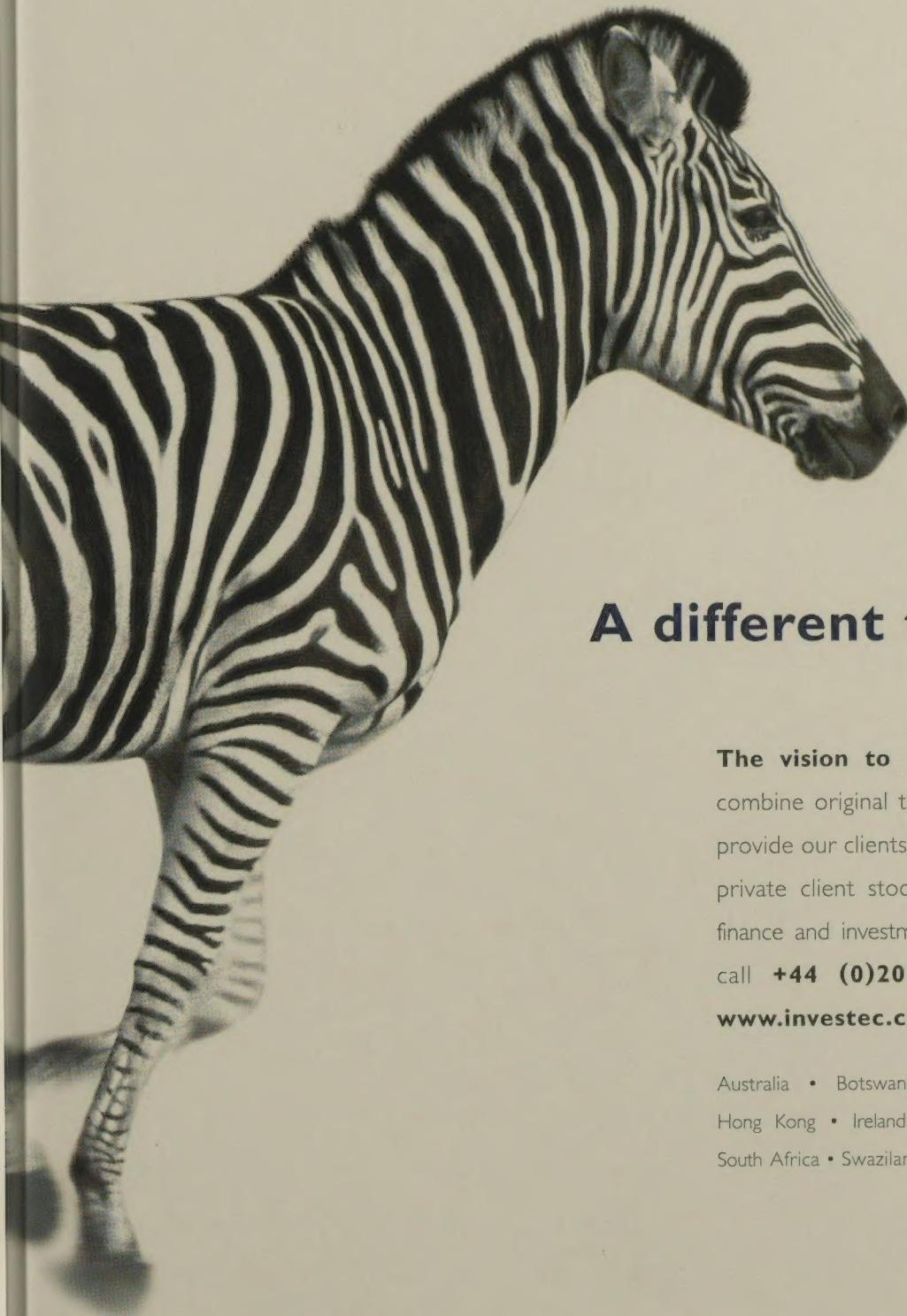
I would be happy to recount the story of the 8ft coffin in the Bank of England; the tale of the most haunted house in London, which is in Berkeley Square; the horrific phantom hitchhiker of the Blackwall Tunnel; or, indeed, the ghostly women's lavatory-flusher in the Bow Bells public house. But, perhaps I should leave these for another time.



READER OFFER

Readers of *ILN* may order copies of *Ghosts of London* for the special price of £12.99 (rrp £14.99) by calling 01332 291945 and quoting reference **ILN02.**

Private Banking | Asset Management | Investment Banking | Treasury & Specialised Finance



A different train of thought

The vision to give you the edge. At Investec we combine original thinking, energy and financial expertise to provide our clients with specialist services in private banking, private client stockbroking, asset management, treasury & finance and investment banking. For more information, please call **+44 (0)20 7597 4000** or visit our website www.investec.com

Australia • Botswana • British Virgin Islands • Channel Islands
Hong Kong • Ireland • Israel • Luxembourg • Mauritius • Namibia
South Africa • Swaziland • Switzerland • United Kingdom • United States

Out of the Ordinary

 **Investec**

De Lamerie



ROYAL OCCASION

THE SUBTLE LILAC GROUND COLOUR BEAUTIFULLY COMPLEMENTS OUR
18TH CENTURY DESIGN WITH ITS WEALTH OF RAISED AND ETCHED 24 CARAT GOLD.

AVAILABLE WITH CO-ORDINATING SILVER AND CRYSTAL.

BESPOKE DESIGNS A SPECIALITY.

NEW CATALOGUE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.



DE LAMERIE LTD 9A WINDSOR END BEACONSFIELD BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HP9 2JJ ENGLAND
TEL 00 44 (0) 1494 680488 FAX 00 44 (0) 1494 680900 INTERNET www.delamerie.com EMAIL info@delamerie.com